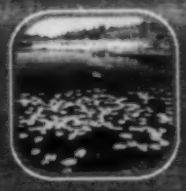

THE LANDSCAPE

PUBLIC OPINION ON ABORIGINAL AND NORTHERN ISSUES

Canada

Published under the authority of the
Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development
Ottawa, 2005
www.ainc-inac.gc.ca
1-800-567-9604
TTY only 1-866-553-0554

QS-6209-001-EE-A1
Catalogue: R1-23/2005E
ISBN 0-662-42188-4

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Cette publication peut aussi être obtenue en français sous le titre: Portrait – Opinion publique sur les questions qui concernent les Autochtones et le Nord

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Acknowledgements

The Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada would like to thank the following Departments for their support in the creation of this document:

- Canadian Heritage
- Environment Canada
- Human Resources and Skills Development Canada
- Health Canada

INAC would also like to thank the following research firms:

- EKOS Research
- GPC Research
- Ipsos-Reid
- Probe Research

We would also like to thank the study partners (in alphabetical order) who contributed to EKOS' study "First Nations People Living On-reserve 2005" and have agreed to sharing this syndicated information:

- Assembly of First Nations
- Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation
- Canadian Heritage
- Health Canada
- Indian and Northern Affairs Canada
- Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada
- Saskatchewan Department of Youth, Recreation and Culture

If you would like more information, please visit:
http://www.millenniumscholarships.ca/images/Publications/mrn-changing-course-en.pdf

Introduction

The second annual edition of *The Landscape* finds its release in the weeks leading up to the First Ministers' Meeting on Aboriginal issues, where the Prime Minister, the Premiers, and the leaders of the five National Aboriginal Organizations (NAOs) will seek to open a new chapter in the relationship between government and First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples.

The collective goal of the FMM is to transform the nature of these relationships so that Canada can finally begin to close the gap in quality-of-life that exists between Aboriginal people and the general population – a gap that is well known among Canadians and well illustrated by the views collected in this booklet.

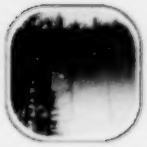
The Landscape gathers together the opinions of Aboriginal people living both on and off reserves, Northerners, and Canadians in the general population in an easily accessible format. The views presented here offer insight into the current attitudes aout and perceptions of Canada's unique set of Aboriginal and Northern issues. They form a snapshot of Canada at the end of an important year for Aboriginal and Northern issues.

This past spring, the Canada-Aboriginal Peoples Roundtable process concluded when the Government of Canada and the leaders of the NAOs signed a series of Accords designed to give Aboriginal leaders a stronger voice in the development of federal Aboriginal policies and programs. The ensuing months have been taken up by the drive to make the Accords work in practical terms.

While public opinion research provides an excellent context for these initiatives, it is also designed to be useful to Canadians from all walks of life. Public opinion research allows us to measure the views and perceptions of Canadians on a variety of policies and general areas of interest. In the case of these new initiatives, *The Landscape* can provide a record of gradual changes in the Canadian social and economic fabric. To this end, the information in this summary will be updated in future editions.

For more information, please contact us by e-mail at **landscape@inac-ainc.gc.ca**.

Executive Summary



Section One – Where Do We Stand?

- Less than a third (30%) of Canadians feel the federal government is doing a good job.
- Only one-quarter (25%) of First Nations people living on reserves believe the federal government is doing a good job.
- Over four in ten Canadians (43%) rank health care as the top priority for the federal government. Less than two in ten (18%) rank education as the top priority. Government/politics ranked third (15%).
- First Nations people living on reserves rank education as the top federal priority (15%), followed by health care (13%). Since last year, education is up five points and health care is down five points.
- Northerners rank health care (11%) and the economy (11%) as the top federal priorities.
- Only 1% of Canadians rank Aboriginal issues as the top priority.
- Just over half of Canadians (51%) believe Aboriginal issues should receive a high priority.

Section Two – Views on Health

- When Canadians are asked what priority government should give to health care, a majority (59%) feel health care should be the highest priority.
- On reserves, slightly more than one in ten (12%) say that health care services should be the top priority. Housing (22%) and education (21%) rank much higher as priorities.
- Currently, four in ten (41%) people on reserves say that the amount and quality of health care for First Nations people is good.
- Slightly fewer than three in ten (29%) say the amount and quality of health care on reserves is poor.
- Just over four in ten people on reserves (44%) believe that the health care they receive is about the same as it has been in the past.
- Nearly four in ten people on reserves (38%) say that health care is better than it has been in the past. Slightly fewer than two in ten (17%) believe it is worse today than in the past.

- On reserves, nearly one-half (48%) say that diabetes is clearly the health care area most in need of attention.
- Alcoholism and drug abuse (15%) are also seen as priority health issues on reserves.

Section Three – Views on Education

- When Canadians are asked to assign a priority ranking to a series of key issues, education ranks first, just above health care.
- A majority of Canadians (63%) want the federal government to increase its involvement in education.
- Fewer than half (45%) of people living on reserves give a positive rating to the quality of education on reserves. One-quarter (26%) rate it as poor.
- When First Nations people are asked which issue involving young people on reserves should receive the federal government's attention, education (48%) is by far the first choice.
- Two-fifths (39%) give a positive rating to the quality of early childhood development on reserves, while one quarter (24%) feel it is poor.

Section Four – Standard of Living and Housing

- A majority of Canadians (59%) believe the standard of living of First Nations is lower than that of other Canadians.
- Less than a tenth of Canadians (9%) feel the standard of living of First Nations people is higher than that of other Canadians.
- More than half of First Nations people living on reserves (55%) rate their quality of life positively.
- Nearly three-quarters (72%) of First Nations people living on reserves believe their quality of life will improve over the next year.
- Only 15% of First Nations people living on reserves feel the amount of housing on reserves is adequate.
- Nearly half (45%) of First Nations people living on reserves rate the quality of housing as poor – less than a third (28%) rate it as good.
- Nearly half (47%) of Canadians, when asked to identify the key housing issues for Aboriginal people, are unable to provide a response.
- In focus group research conducted in the North, every community describes a shortage of safe and affordable housing.

Section Five – Views on Negotiation and Relationship-building

- Less than a fifth (17%) of First Nations people living on reserves feel that relations between Aboriginal people and other Canadians are poor.
- Just under two-fifths (37%) of First Nation people on reserves believe relations are improving, while 13% feel they are deteriorating.
- Over half (57%) of First Nations people living on reserves said they had not experienced racism over the past two years, while 42 percent said they had. Aboriginal people living off-reserve responded similarly.
- A large majority of First Nations people living on reserves (82%) believe that settling land claims is important to improving the lives of First Nations people.
- A majority of British Columbians (56%) believe that completing treaties will be a benefit to British Columbia as a whole.
- Just over eight in ten (81%) Canadians are unfamiliar with the Powley decision involving hunting and Aboriginal rights for Métis people.
- Slightly more than one-half (54%) of Canadians agree that Métis people have been treated fairly by the government – 35% disagree.

Section Six – Views on Economic Development

- Just over a third (36%) of First Nations people living on reserves say that economic conditions on reserves are good, while just under a third (31%) say conditions are poor.
- When people are asked what would improve the economy on their reserves, the most popular response was the creation of more job opportunities (43%).
- Over a third (36%) of Canadians are against increasing Aboriginal access to natural resources and just under a third (30%) feel it would be positive.
- When asked what the Government of Canada could focus on to support Northern economic development, Northern business decision-makers ranked taxes first (15%), followed by the economy (11%).
- Improving skills and training was the number one priority in all three territories when Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people were asked to rank the most important issues facing the North.

Section Seven – Views on Northern-Specific Issues

Mackenzie Gas Project

- A majority of people in the Northwest Territories agree that the Mackenzie Gas Project will create more jobs (67%), increase revenues for Aboriginal people (66%), and increase revenues for the territorial government (61%).
- Over two-fifths (42%) of those surveyed believe the project is likely to harm the environment, while over a third (36%) believe it is likely to harm Aboriginal peoples' way of life.

Alaska Highway Pipeline Project

- The majority of Yukoners are familiar with the Alaska Highway Pipeline Project (82%) and most believe the project is a good idea (72%).
- Two-fifths of Yukoners (39%) believe the project will harm the environment, while just over a third (35%) believe it will harm the way of life of Aboriginal people.

Contaminated Sites

- Nearly four-fifths (78%) of people in Nunavut are concerned about the environmental side-effects from contaminated sites like Resolution Island.

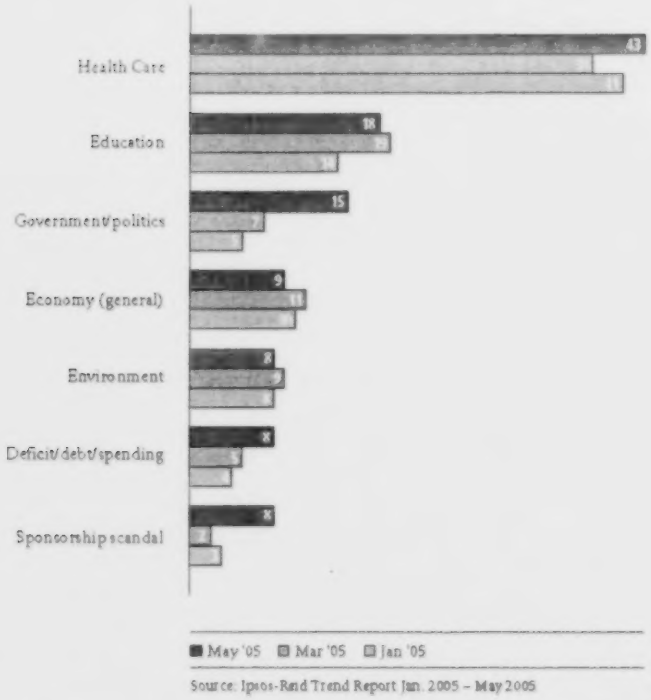
THE RESULTS

SECTION ONE – WHERE DO WE STAND?

A – Most Important Issue

General Population

Top of mind government priorities

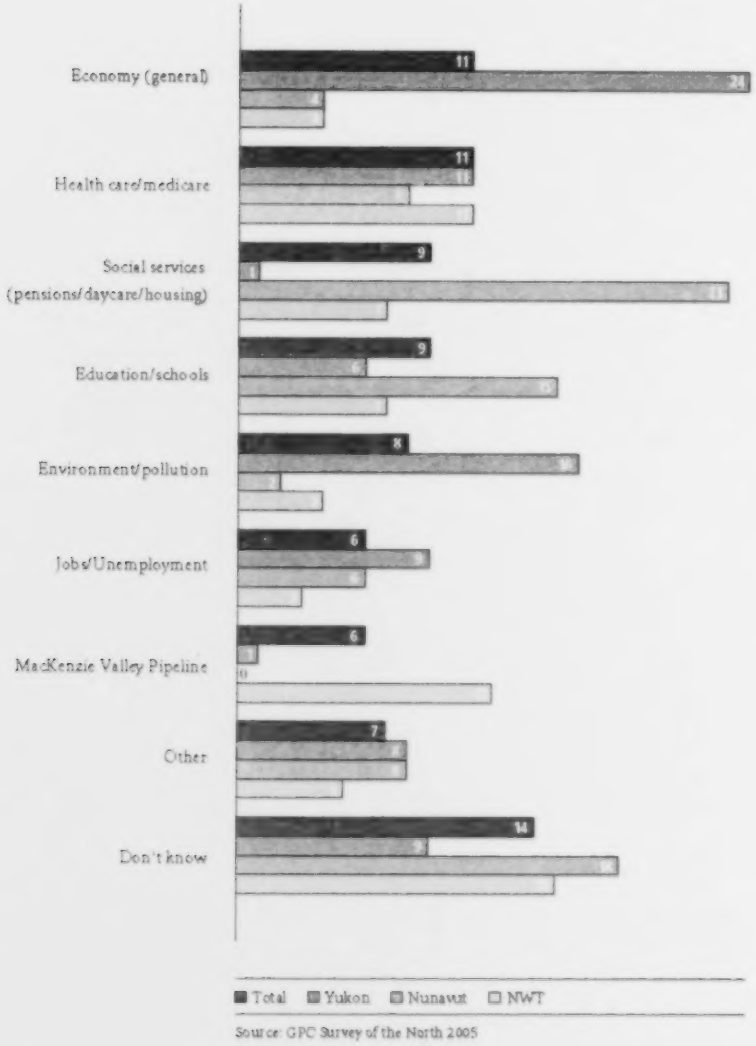


Source: Ipsos-Reid Trend Report Jan. 2005 – May 2005

- When Canadians are asked to name the top priority for the Government of Canada, it is not surprising that health care (43%) emerges as the top priority. In fact, health care has been seen as the top priority for the past several months and has increased by five points since March 2005.
- Education (18%) is seen as an issue of relatively high importance for Canadians, but is clearly lower in importance than health. Government/politics (15%) has increased in importance over the past several months. Issues relating to government/politics have tripled in importance since January 2005.
- Aboriginal issues continue to be below the radar for most Canadians with only one percent seeing them as the top priority.

North – General Population

Most important issue by region – North (General Population)



Source: GPC Survey of the North 2005

When looking at the most important issue among Canada's Northern population, we see a slightly different set of results.

- Northerners were asked an open-ended question on the most important issue facing their territory. Health care (11%) is given a high priority by Northerners; but, unlike in the rest of Canada, it shares the top spot with the economy (11%).
- Education (9%) is seen as a slightly lower priority than both health care and the economy and is seen as being equal in importance to social services (9%).
- Fourteen percent of Northerners do not give an answer to this question.

North – Business Decision-makers

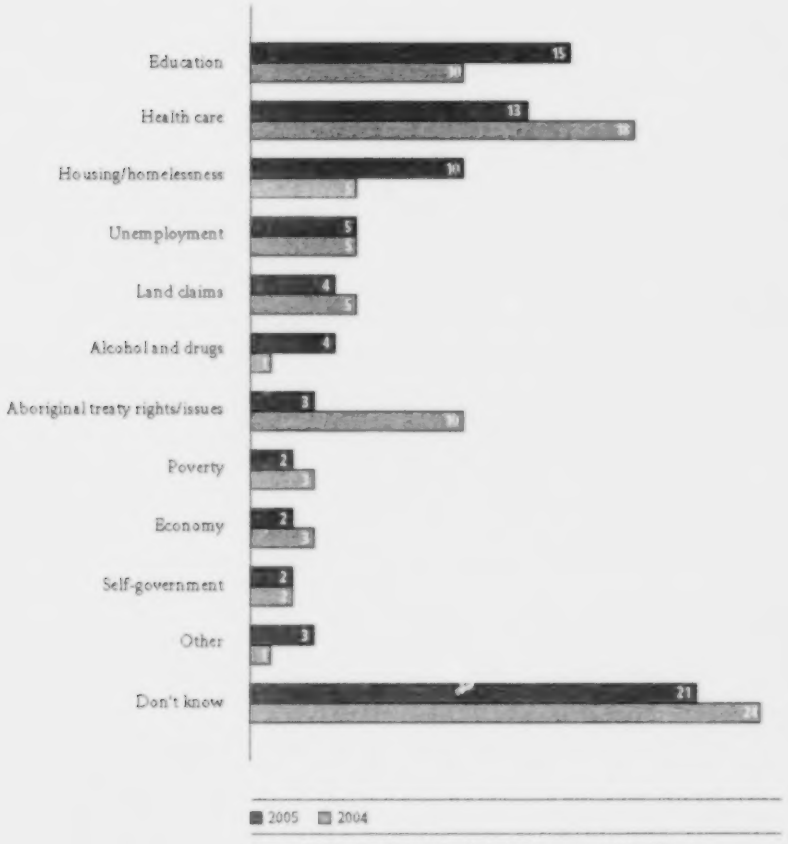
Most important issue – North (Business Decision-makers)

Source: GPC Survey of the North 2005

As part of our survey of the North in 2005, INAC has, for the first time, included a survey of 251 business decision-makers in Canada's three Northern territories. These business leaders were asked an open-ended question on the most important priority for the Government of Canada with regard to supporting business in the North.

- Taxes (15%) are seen as the most important issue for this group. Equal numbers say that the economy in general (11%) and government funding in particular (11%) should be the most important priority for the Government of Canada.

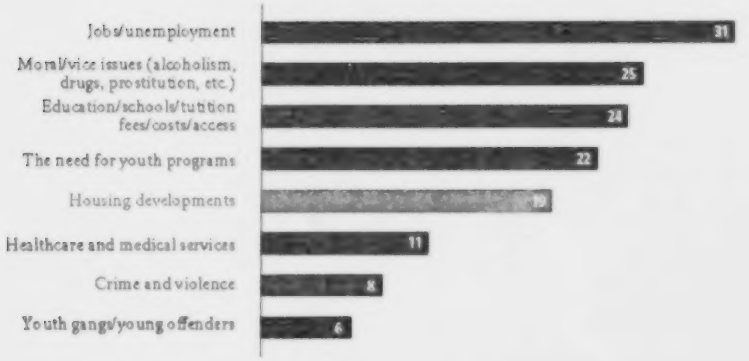
Government's top priority for First Nations people – On-reserve



Source: EKOS – First Nations People Living On-reserve 2005 – Wave 1
EKOS – First Nations People Living On-reserve 2004

- First Nations on reserves see education (15%) as the most important issue for the government while health care (13%) is seen as the most important issue by a slightly smaller proportion.
- Even though these two issues are nearly equal in terms of perceived importance, there has been a shift since the question was last asked in 2004. Health care has dropped a full five points since 2004 while education has actually risen by five percent.
- Another key issue for First Nations people on reserves is housing/homelessness (10%) which has doubled in perceived importance since 2004.

Most important issue or concern among Aboriginal people living off-reserve – Manitoba



Source: Probe Research – Indigenous Voices, 2005

INAC conducted research among on and off reserves Aboriginal people living in Manitoba.

Given its high population of Aboriginal people living off-reserve, Manitoba is an ideal place to examine the various issues facing this hard to find population.

- Among the issues facing on- and off-reserve Aboriginal people in Manitoba, jobs/unemployment (31%) receives the highest rating. Issues relating to moral/vice issues such as alcoholism, drugs and prostitution (25%) and education issues such as schools, tuition and general education issues (24%) also rank very high.
- Youth programs (22%) are also mentioned by this key segment of the Manitoban population.

"I have a university degree in sociology but I can't find a job, so I think I'm going to go back to be a social worker."

Off-reserve – National (Qualitative)

In addition to our survey work among both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations in Canada, INAC has undertaken qualitative research. This research, in the form of a series of focus groups, provides a more detailed look at the lives and perceptions of INAC's key interest groups.

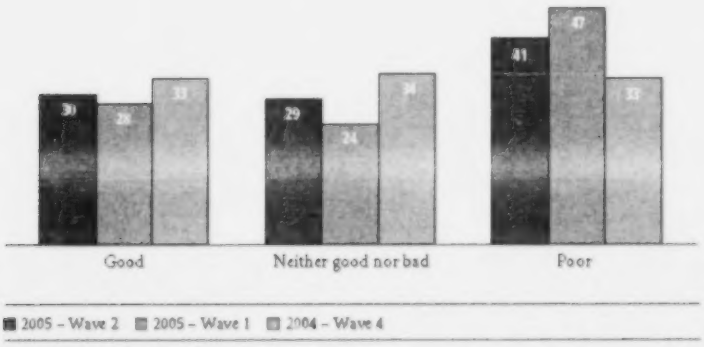
INAC conducted a nation-wide qualitative research project among Aboriginal people living off-reserve. Among other topics, participants were asked to share their goals or plans for the next five years. This project consisted of 20 focus groups held across the country during the last two weeks of March 2005.

Many of the participants' goals tended to revolve around obtaining more education/skills, finding work, or getting a better job. Specifically, many participants aspired to work within the Aboriginal community either as social workers, teachers, addictions counselors or language and cultural instructors.

B – Performance of the Government of Canada

General Population

Overall performance of the federal government

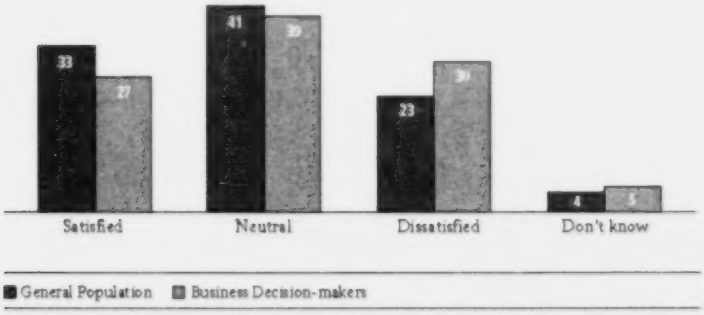


Source: EKOS – Rethinking Government 2005 – Wave 2

- Currently, four in ten Canadians (41%) believe that the Government of Canada is doing a poor job. While this is substantial, the number that believes the government is doing a poor job has decreased by six points since the question was last asked in early 2005.
- Nearly equal proportions believe that the government is either doing a good job (30%) or neither a good nor bad job (29%).

North – General Population

Satisfaction with level of service from the federal goverment – North

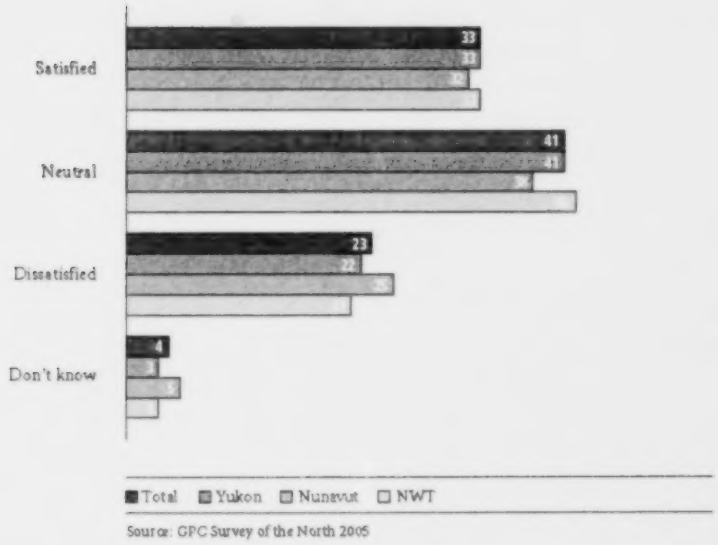


Source: GPC Survey of the North 2005

Northerners were asked to rate their satisfaction with the level of service they receive from the Government of Canada.

- Northerners (33%) are slightly more likely than Canadians south of 60° (30%) to say that they are satisfied with the level of service they receive from the federal government. Northerners are, however, much more likely than their counterparts in the rest of the country to say that the government is doing neither a good nor a bad job (North-41%; Rest of Canada-29%).
- Compared with business decision-makers in the North, general population Northerners are slightly more likely to be satisfied with the performance of the federal government. Business decision-makers lean towards being dissatisfied with the federal government's performance (30% are dissatisfied).

Performance of the federal government by region – North (General Population)

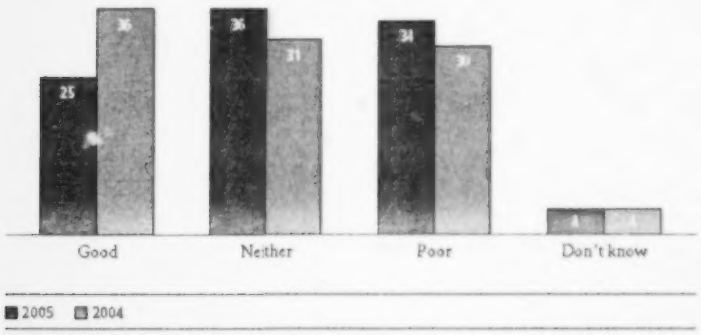


Source: GPC Survey of the North 2005

- There is very little variation when Northerners in the three territories are asked to assess the performance of the federal government. Nunavut residents are, however, slightly more likely than those in the other two territories to say they are dissatisfied with the level of service they receive from the Government of Canada.

On-Reserve

Overall performance of the federal government – On-reserve



Source: EKOS – First Nations People Living On-reserve 2005 – Wave 1
EKOS – First Nations People Living On-reserve 2004

- First Nations people living on reserves express lower levels of satisfaction with the performance of the federal government than Canadians in general.
- Currently only one quarter (25%) of First Nations people living on reserves say that the overall performance of the federal government is good. This number has dropped dramatically from 2004 when more than one-third (36%) said that the federal government was performing well.
- The number of First Nations people on reserves who believe the government is performing poorly (34%) has increased by four points since last year.

Overall performance of the Government of Canada – On-reserve (regional breakdown)*

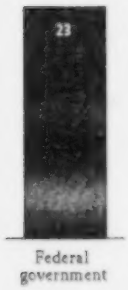
Source: EKOS – First Nations People Living On-reserve 2005 – Wave 1

*those saying that the overall performance is good

- Looking at the results regionally, we find that First Nations in Atlantic Canada are most likely (38%) to say that the overall performance of the Government of Canada is good. First Nations in BC (18%) are least likely to give a positive rating to the Government of Canada's performance.

On- and off-Reserve

Overall helpfulness of the federal government – Off-reserve (Manitoba)*



Source: Indigenous Voices 2005 – Probe Research

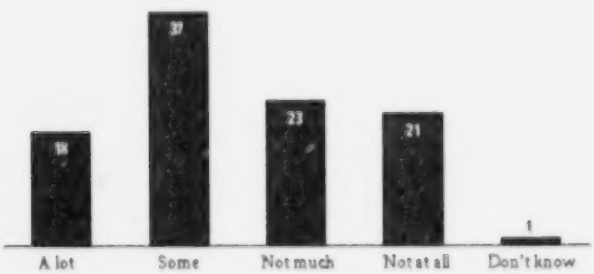
*those saying "very helpful"

- One quarter of Aboriginal people living in Manitoba (23%) say that the federal government is very helpful.

C – Awareness of Aboriginal Issues and Culture

General Population

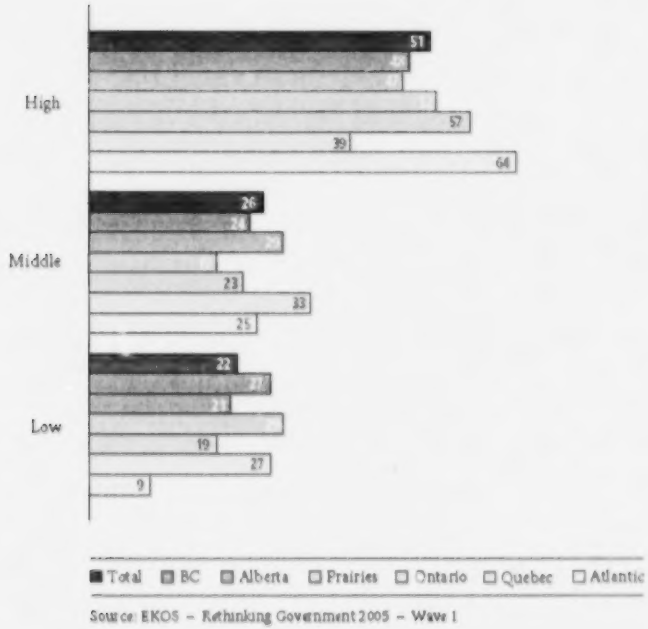
Recent exposure to Aboriginal culture



Source: EKOS – Rethinking Government 2005 – Wave 2

- Over one half of Canadians (55%) say that they have been exposed to Aboriginal culture within the past year with nearly two in ten (18%) saying that they have had a lot of exposure.
- Two in ten (21%), however, say that they have had no exposure at all to Aboriginal culture within the past year.

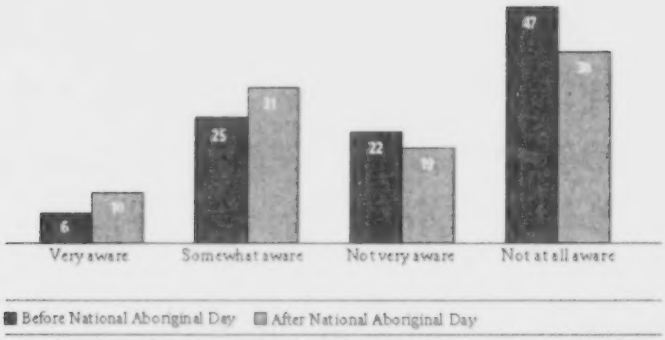
Priority to place on Aboriginal issues



Source: EKOS – Rethinking Government 2005 – Wave 1

- When asked to prioritize Aboriginal issues, over one half of Canadians (51%) feel that they should receive a high priority from the government. Only two in ten (22%) feel that Aboriginal issues should receive a low priority rating.
- Regionally, those living in Atlantic Canada (64%) and Ontario (57%) place the highest priority on Aboriginal issues, while the lowest priority rating is given by Quebecers (39%) and Albertans (47%).

Awareness of National Aboriginal Day



Source: Report on National Aboriginal Day 2005

A recent study examined Canadians' awareness of issues relating to National Aboriginal Day (June 21st). There were two waves of this study in 2005. One wave was conducted in the weeks leading up to National Aboriginal Day and the other was conducted in the weeks following.

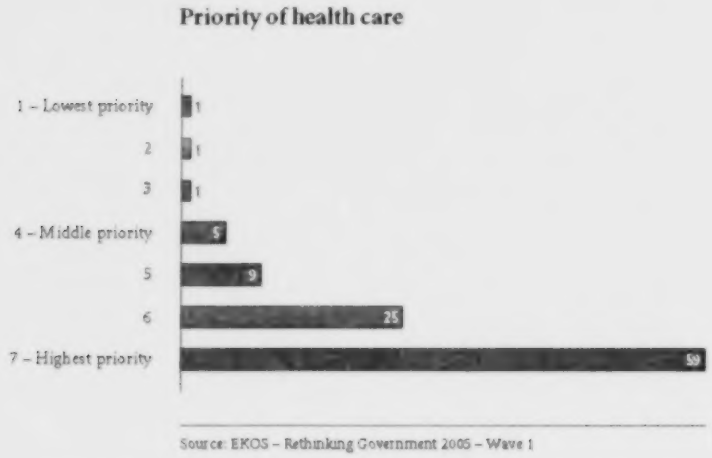
- Prior to National Aboriginal Day, three in ten Canadians (31%) said that they were aware of the day with six percent saying they were very aware. However, this number increases somewhat when the same question is asked after June 21st. Four in ten (41%) say that they are aware of National Aboriginal Day and those that say they are very aware increases to 10 percent.
- In spite of the fact that awareness of National Aboriginal Day increases after the day, participation in associated activities remains the same. Nine in ten say that they have not participated in National Aboriginal Day activities either before (92%) or after (91%) June 21st.

THE RESULTS

SECTION TWO – VIEWS ON HEALTH

A – Priority of Health Care

General Population

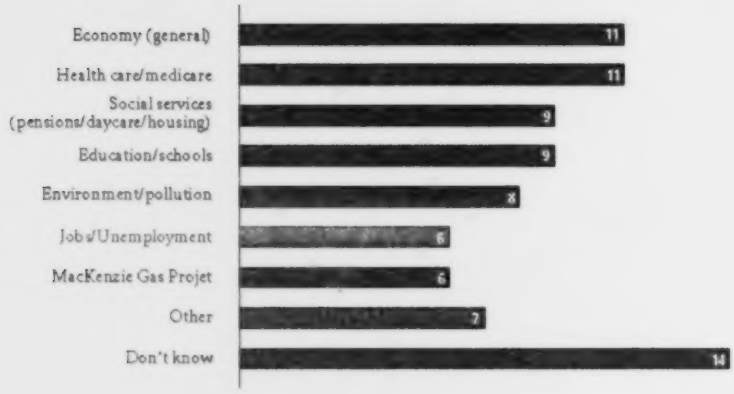


Source: EKOS – Rethinking Government 2005 – Wave 1

- When Canadians are asked about the priority level that the government should place on health using a seven-point scale (where seven is the highest priority and one is the lowest priority), a large majority (59%) say that it should be given the highest priority.
- In fact, if all of the high priority ratings are combined (those who answered 5, 6 or 7), Canadians almost unanimously (93%) see health care as a high priority.
- These findings are consistent across all of the regions of Canada.

North – General Population

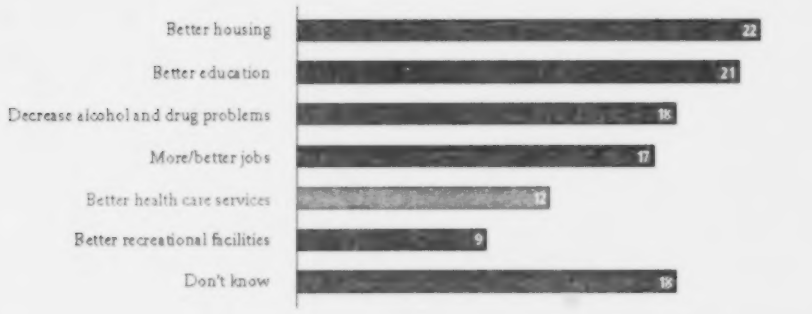
Priority of various issues – Top seven choices



Source: GPC Survey of the North 2005

- As was mentioned previously in this document, there is no one clear response among Northerners when they are asked to outline the top priority for the North.
- Health care/medicare (11%), along with the economy in general (11%), is the top priority among Northerners although it is only a marginally higher priority than other issues tested.

Most urgent areas needing attention on reserves – Top six choices



Source: EKOS – First Nations People Living On-reserve 2005 – Wave 1

When First Nations people are asked which area is most in need of attention on reserves, health care does not register strongly as an area of concern.

- Slightly more than one in ten (12%) say that health care services should be the top priority on reserves. However, housing (22%) and education (21%) are clearly the two most dominant concerns among First Nations people living on reserves.
- It should be noted that a relatively high number (18%) do not, or cannot, provide an answer to this question.

Most important health issue

Source: EKOS – First Nations People Living On-reserve 2005 – Wave 2

- When First Nations people are asked to specifically outline the largest health care concern on reserves, the top priority is quite clear. More than four in ten (44%) say that diabetes is the health care area that most needs attention.
- Alcoholism and drug abuse (14%) are also seen as priority health issues on reserves. Interestingly, smoking (1%) is not seen as a significant health problem by First Nations people living on reserves.

B – Satisfaction with Health Care

General Population

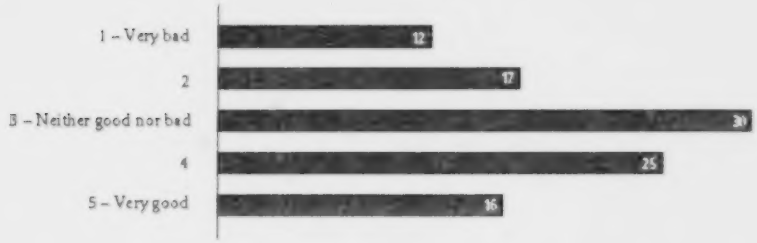
Performance of the federal government on health care

Source: EKOS – Rethinking Government 2005 – Wave 1

Given that health care remains the top policy priority for Canadians, it is important to gauge the government's performance on this issue. In order to determine the satisfaction levels among general population Canadians, a seven point scale was used, with seven being "excellent" and one being "terrible".

- Currently, slightly more than four in ten (41%) are satisfied overall with the government's performance on health care. It is important to note, however, that support for the issue is not very strong with a large number of those who do approve (26%) rating the performance only five out of a possible seven.
- Dissatisfaction on this key issue is relatively high with 38 percent saying that they are dissatisfied overall with the government's performance. Two in ten (20%) say that the performance of the government on this issue is neither good nor bad.

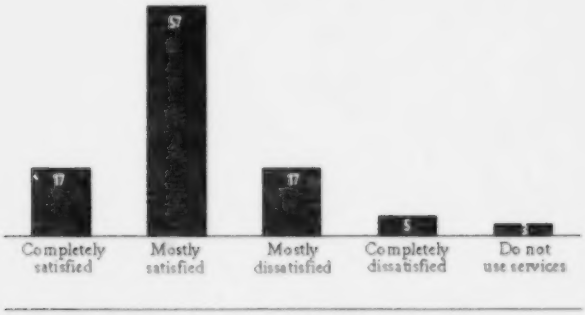
Amount and quality of health care to First Nations



Source: EKOS – First Nations People Living On-reserve 2005 – Wave 1

- Overall satisfaction with health care among First Nations people living on reserves is consistent with the views of the general population.
- Currently, four in ten (41%) First Nations say that the amount and quality of health care for First Nations people is good. Dissatisfaction is relatively high with slightly fewer than three in ten (29%) saying that the amount and quality of health care on reserves is bad.
- First Nations people living on reserves are, however, more likely (30%) than those in the rest of Canada to say that health care is neither good nor bad.

Satisfaction with quality of health care in past 12 months



Source: EKOS – First Nations People Living On-reserve 2005 – Wave 2

In order to gauge personal satisfaction, First Nations people on reserves were asked to rate their individual experience with the health care system over the past 12 months.

- Personal satisfaction levels are relatively high with three quarters saying they have either been mostly (57%) or completely (17%) satisfied with the quality of health care in the past 12 months.
- Less than one-quarter (22%) say that they have been either mostly (17%) or completely (5%) dissatisfied.

Quality of health care on-reserve vs. other communities

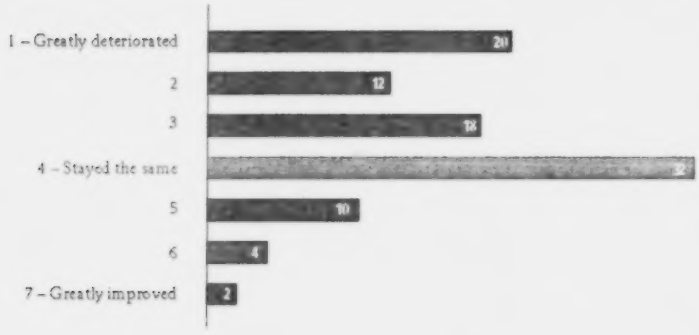
Source: EKOS – First Nations People Living On-reserve 2005 – Wave 2

- When First Nations people are asked to rate health care services relative to other communities in Canada, a majority (53%) believes that health care on reserves is about the same as it is in the rest of the country.
- Two in ten (22%) believe that health care on reserves is better, while slightly fewer than two in ten (18%) say that it is worse.

C – Health Care Service: Improving or Deteriorating?

General Population

State of health care over the past two years



Source: EKOS – Rethinking Government 2005 – Wave 1

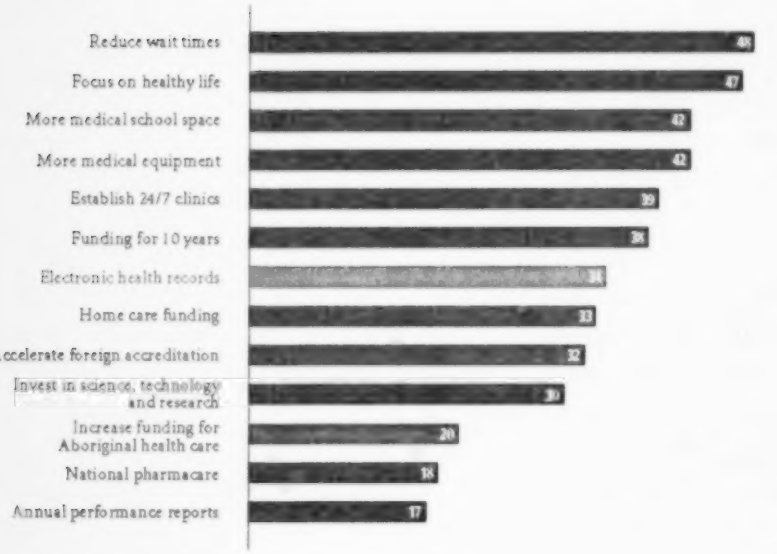
- When asked whether the health care system has improved, deteriorated or stayed the same in the past two years, Canadians clearly believe that it has deteriorated (50%).
- In fact, two in ten (20%) believe that the health care system has greatly deteriorated in the past two years. One third of Canadians (32%) believes that is has remained the same over the past two years and has shown no marked improvement.
- Sixteen percent of Canadians currently believe that the health care system has improved during the past two years.

Agreement that government will improve health care in the next two years

Source: EKOS – Rethinking Government 2005 – Wave 2

- Not only do Canadians see the health care system as having not improved over the past two years, they are also relatively pessimistic when asked if it will improve over the *next* two years.
- Currently, one-half (51%) disagrees that the health care system will show an improvement over the next two years. One quarter (23%) actually strongly disagrees that an improvement will occur over the next two years.
- Still, an encouragingly high three in ten (30%) believes that the health care system will improve over the next two years.

Measures to improve health care in the 10 year plan



Source: Health Canada – National Polling Post-First Ministers' Meeting – 2004

Health Canada conducted a study among the general population in order to test perceptions of the 10-year plan to strengthen health care. A number of options were presented to Canadians who were asked to what extent they believed each option would improve the quality of health care.

- The reduction of wait times (48%) and focusing on healthy living (47%) were seen as the two most important elements of the 10 year plan by a small margin.
- More medical school space (42%) and more medical equipment (42%) were also seen as equally important elements in the plan to strengthen health care.
- Increasing funding for Aboriginal health care ranks low on the list of priorities with only two in ten (20%) seeing this as an important element in the plan to strengthen the health care system.

On-reserve

Health care better or worse now than in the past

Source: EKOS – First Nations People Living On-reserve 2005 – Wave 2

- First Nations people living on reserves currently believe that the health care they receive on reserves is about the same (44%) as it has been in the past.
- More encouraging is the fact that nearly four in ten (38%) say that health care is actually better than it has been in the past.
- Slightly fewer than two in ten (17%) believe that health care on reserves is worse today than in the past.

THE RESULTS

SECTION THREE – VIEWS ON EDUCATION

A – Importance of Education and Skills Development

General Population

Education is clearly seen as an important top-of-mind issue for Canadians. Both general population Canadians and Northerners place education second on their list of issues of importance, while for Aboriginal people living on reserves, education is the most important issue. Issues surrounding education also resonate with Aboriginal people living off-reserve who elaborated on their specific challenges in our recent qualitative research project.

When Canadians are asked to assign a priority rating to a series of key issues, education and health care are clearly seen as the highest priority issues.

Post-secondary education is also seen as an issue of high importance for Canadians. Given that employment is often linked with education, it is interesting to note that this is at the bottom of the list of priority issues.

North

According to our recent qualitative findings, Aboriginal people in the North generally understand the importance of education and skills training in securing rewarding employment. There seems to be a fairly high awareness of various educational and training institutions, including some of the main programs they offer. According to our findings, people feel that if they needed advice about acquiring skills and education, they would know at least one person they could speak with who would have a reasonable chance of pointing them in the right direction.

"It was so hard. I had to go to Yellowknife for a year. They paid for school but there wasn't much left. I was away from my family and I was broke and lonely."

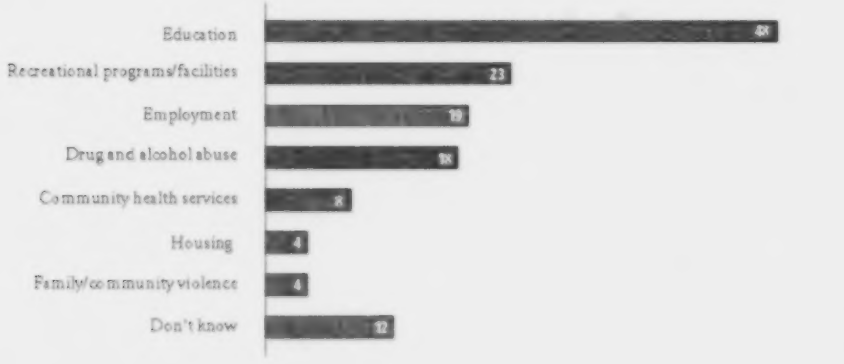
Most of the participants either know or assume that some form of assistance is available to them. The main barriers with respect to pursuing education and training are: 1) the inadequate level of financial assistance (particularly for a parent taking care of children) and, 2) having to relocate in order to go to school.

"I need to get my chainsaw [certificate] and then I'll be set, but I don't have the $500.00 to pay for it."

In these qualitative groups, Aboriginal Notherns also persive education as a way to be certified in the necessary skills used in much of Northern employment. A number of Aboriginal participants in the NWT and Yukon groups said that they needed formal education in order to obtain certification in areas such as "chainsaw safety" and first aid in order to be able to secure a good job. Many of these participants said that they could not afford to pay for the course they needed in order to do this.

On-reserve

Priority of issues facing young people living on-reserve – Top seven choices



Source: EKOS – First Nations People Living On-reserve 2004

- When First Nations people are asked which of the issues facing young people on reserves the Government of Canada should focus on, education (48%) is far and away the number one choice. In fact, education is more than double the second most important priority issue, recreational programs and facilities (23%).
- Demographically, education is more likely to be seen as the highest priority issue by the most affluent First Nations people and by those living in British Columbia.

Off-reserve

For Aboriginal people living off-reserve, the challenge of landing a good job is often linked to the challenge of obtaining sufficient skills and/or education. According to the participants in our qualitative groups, educational needs vary a great deal.

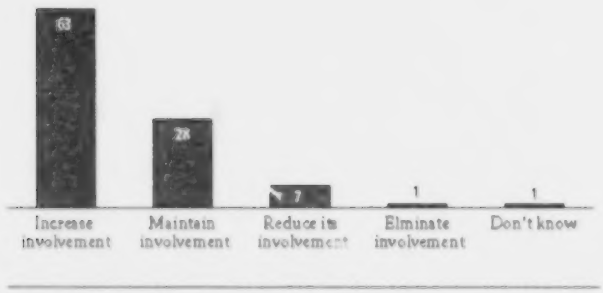
While some of the off-reserve participants wanted to finish high school, others were looking to pursue post-secondary education or to get into a trade. Money to pay for education seemed to be the largest and most obvious barrier, particularly for the low-income Métis participants who cannot, unlike some Status Indians, look to a band as a possible source of funding. Some also noted that it was difficult to go to school while also trying to support oneself or a family.

B – Government Involvement in Education

Given the prominence of education as an issue of importance among various audiences, it is interesting to explore how leadership on this issue is perceived.

General Population

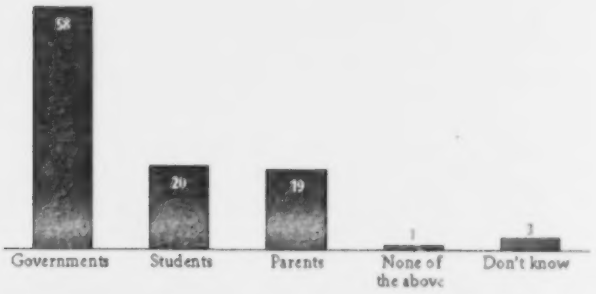
Involvement of federal government in education



Source: EKOS – Rethinking Government 2005 – Wave 1

- A majority of Canadians (63%) want the federal government to increase its involvement in education in the future. One quarter of Canadians (28%) would like the federal government to maintain its current level of involvement while very small numbers would like the government to either reduce its involvement (7%) or eliminate its involvement altogether (1%).
- The tendency to want the federal government to increase its role in education is highest among the youngest Canadians.

Responsibility for paying for post-secondary education



Source: EKOS – First Nations People Living On-reserve 2005 – Wave 2

- When asked who they feel has the greater responsibility for paying for post-secondary education, a majority of First Nations people living on reserves (58%) believe that governments should pay. Nearly equal numbers believe that paying for post-secondary education should be the responsibility of the students (20%) or the parents (19%).

Availability of role models for First Nations youth

Source: EKOS – First Nations People Living On-reserve 2005 – Wave 2

- In our qualitative research among First Nations people living on reserves, participants have mentioned the importance of role models within the community.

- When asked specifically about the opportunities that First Nations people on reserves have for role models to guide them in their choices in life, nearly four in ten (37%) rate these opportunities as either good (16%) or very good (20%). While this is encouraging it should be noted that a slightly higher number (42%) says that these opportunities are neither good nor poor.
- A relatively low number (20%) assign either a poor (11%) or very poor (9%) rating to the opportunities for role models on reserves.

C – Quality of Aboriginal education

On-reserve

Quality of education available on-reserve

Source: EKOS – First Nations People Living On-reserve 2005 – Wave 1

Basic education

- When First Nations people living on reserves are asked to rate the quality of basic education on reserves, slightly less than one-half (45%) give a positive rating. One quarter (26%) says that the quality of on-reserve education is poor. A substantial number of First Nations people living on reserves (27%) do not provide an answer to this question.
- Looking at the results regionally, satisfaction with the quality of on-reserve education is highest in Atlantic Canada and Saskatchewan, while First Nations people living in British Columbia are least likely to give a positive rating.

Early childhood development

- Four in ten (39%) First Nations people living on reserves give a positive rating to the quality of early childhood development on reserves. One third (33%) of First Nations people living on reserves say that it is neither good nor poor while one-quarter (24%) say that the amount of early childhood development on reserves is poor.
- Regionally, the highest positive rating for early childhood education is given in Atlantic Canada; the lowest ratings are given in Alberta and Manitoba.

In addition to exploring this issue in our survey among First Nations people living on reserves, we asked First Nations participants in our focus groups for their impressions and perceptions of the quality of on-reserve education. Despite the fact that First Nations people expressed satisfaction with basic education when prompted in our survey, this detailed focus group discussion highlighted comparisons to the education system found off-reserve.

- In general, focus group participants were not satisfied with the education system on their reserve compared to that found off-reserve (one family was sending their children to the neighbouring town school for this reason).
- Youth themselves believe education requirements within the reserve school are "too slack" and reported that making the transition to an off-reserve school or post-secondary education can be difficult if the quality of on-reserve education is poor.

- Other perceived issues include: lack of access to certain types of courses (e.g., chemistry) and an abundance of inexperienced and uncommitted teachers. On the positive side, one participant noted that their reserve school is small and, therefore, it is difficult to "get into trouble, 'cause I'd get told on".

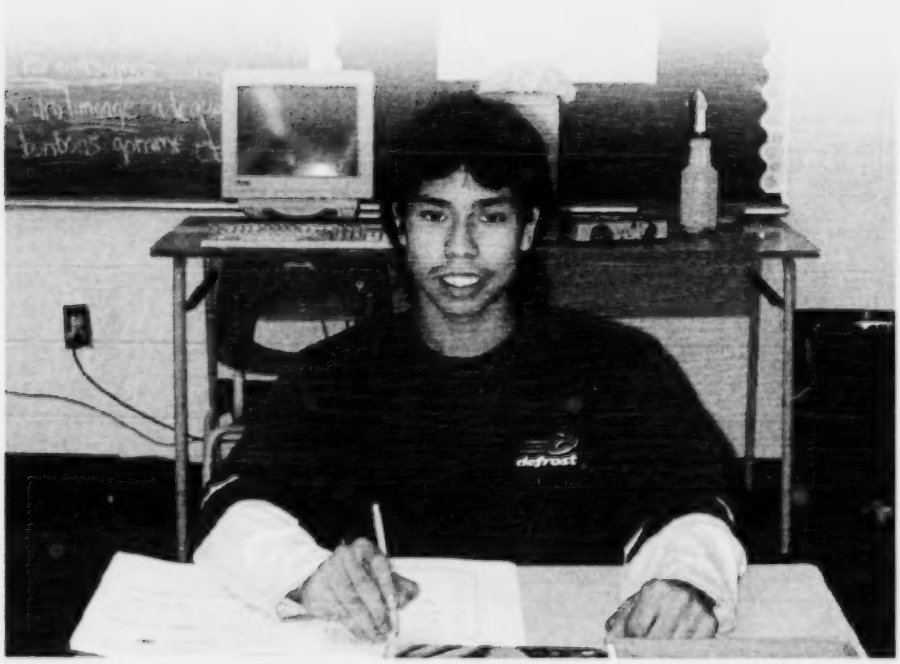
Off-reserve

One of the major issues surrounding education among Aboriginal people living off-reserve is the discrimination that some Status Indians say they face, particularly when trying to obtain funding for their education. Also, many of the participants who still had "roots" and "rights" with respect to their reserve, express frustration with how they are sometimes treated by their band.

In addition, many of the participants in our sessions found the process of trying to obtain funding from gatekeepers, such as band offices and provincial Métis associations, difficult and challenging.

Others report that they have difficulty receiving funding for the type of education they wish to pursue, or that the funding they do receive is not sufficient to cover the costs of books and basic living expenses.

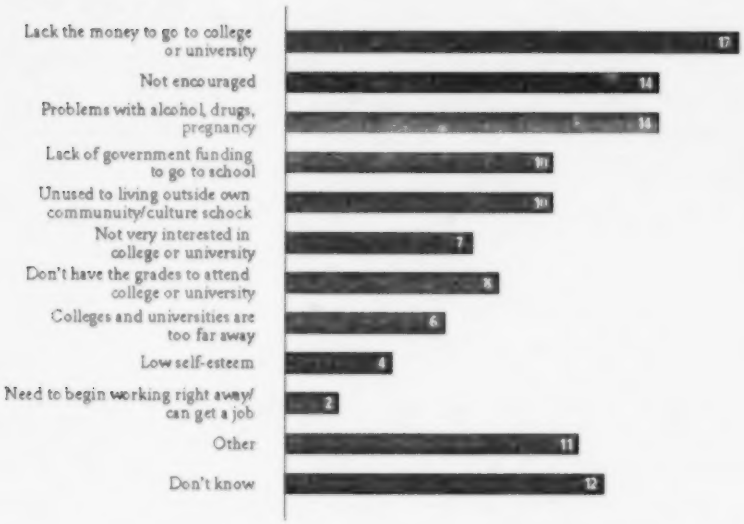
"They get funding for me as if I was still there, but I don't get to use it. I have a right to education, but they always say that there's no money left."



D – Educational Challenges for Aboriginal People

On-reserve

Barriers to post-secondary attendance of young Aboriginal people vs. rest of Canada

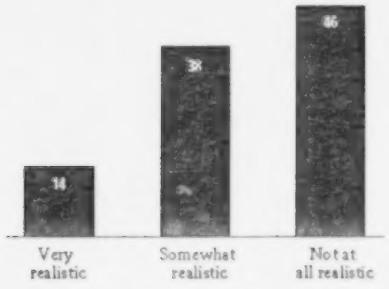


Source: EKOS – First Nations People Living On-reserves 2005 – Wave 2

As mentioned earlier, post-secondary attendance among young Aboriginal people is lower than among other populations in Canada. First Nations people living on reserves were asked about this.

- Lack of money to go to college or university (17%) is seen as the primary reason for young people not pursuing post-secondary education.
- Slightly smaller numbers believe that this lower attendance rate is due to a lack of encouragement (14%) or to problems with alcohol, drugs or pregnancy (14%).
- Related to the perceived lack of money available to go to college or university, one in ten (10%) First Nations people on reserves believes that this proportionately low attendance is due to a lack of government funding. Another one in ten (10%) believes the primary reason is that young Aboriginal people are unused to living outside of their community or experience culture shock.

Realistic for low-income people to save for post-secondary education



Source: EKOS – First Nations People Living On-reserve 2005 – Wave 2

- When First Nations people living on reserves are asked whether it is realistic for people with a household income under $35,000 per year to save for post-secondary education, the answer is no.
- Nearly one-half of First Nations people on reserves (46%) believe it is not at all realistic for a person with this annual household income to save for post-secondary education.
- Nearly four in ten (38%) believe that saving for post-secondary education is at least somewhat realistic given these restrictions, while only 14 percent thinks it is very realistic.

Off-reserve

According to the qualitative data gathered among Aboriginal people living off-reserve, some of the key educational challenges include disillusionment, confusion, and bitterness regarding the challenges they face in attempting to secure rewarding work despite having pursued education at a post-secondary level. Some participants expressed particular frustration at the difficulty they saw in obtaining a job with the federal government.

A number of participants in these groups felt that a revision of curricula is necessary given that education programs at all levels were assumed or judged to propagate a Euro-centric view of history. Participants therefore thought it would be important to, for example, inform the Canadian public (including Métis and Aboriginal persons) about the role the Métis played in shaping Canada and the persecution they endured following the 1885 rebellion.

"They have social studies and Native studies, but neither deals with Métis history. We need that in our schools."

E – Aboriginal Language and Heritage

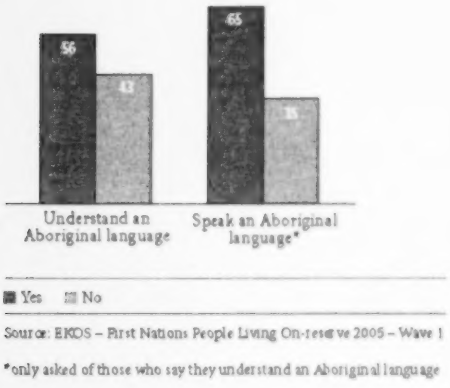
The Department of Canadian Heritage recently undertook research that looked into views and perceptions of Aboriginal language and heritage among First Nations people living on reserves.

Importance of retaining Aboriginal languages

Source: EKOS – First Nations People Living On-reserve 2005 – Wave 1

- There is significant consensus around the importance of retaining one's Aboriginal language. More than nine in ten (95%) agree that it is important for them to keep, learn or re-learn their Aboriginal language (83% say "very important").
- The importance placed on retaining Aboriginal languages is higher among First Nations youth and those without a high school diploma.

Comprehension of Aboriginal languages

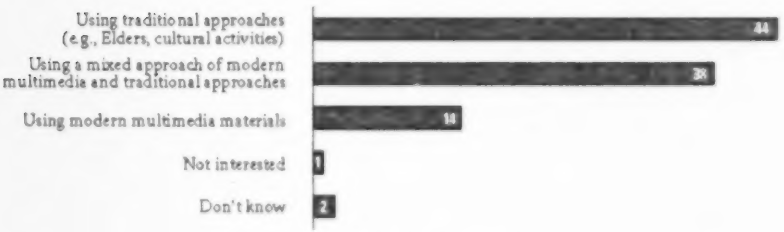


Source: EKOS – First Nations People Living On-reserve 2005 – Wave 1

*only asked of those who say they understand an Aboriginal language

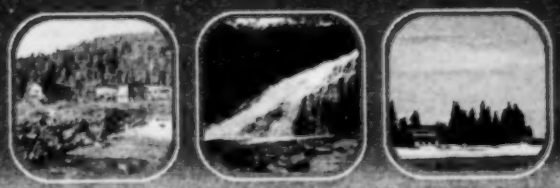
- Slightly more than half (56%) of those who did not report an Aboriginal mother tongue say that they understand an Aboriginal language.
- Of the half who said that they understand an Aboriginal language, but that it was not the first language they learned, two-thirds (65 per cent) said that they speak an Aboriginal language.

Approaches to retaining Aboriginal language



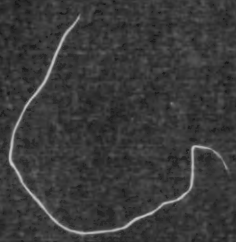
Source: EKOS – First Nations People Living On-reserve 2005 – Wave 1

- If given the choice, many (44%) would prefer to use traditional approaches such as cultural activities to ensure the retention of their Aboriginal language.
- More than one-third (38%) would prefer to use a combination of modern multimedia and traditional methods.
- The use of a completely modern approach to Aboriginal language retention is not a popular choice for First Nations people on-reserve – it was chosen by only 14 percent of those surveyed and is, in fact, even less popular among youth than it is among older residents.



THE RESULTS

SECTION FOUR – VIEWS ON STANDARD OF LIVING AND HOUSING

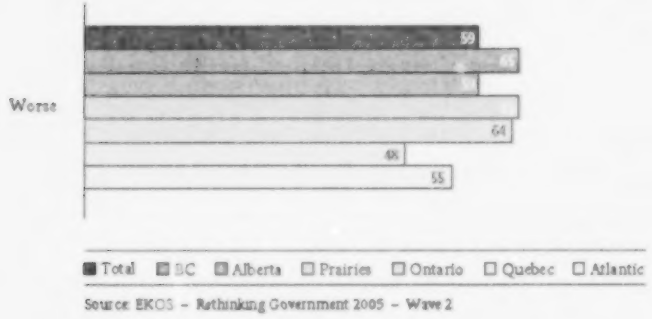


Section Four – Views on Standard of Living and Housing

A – Standard of Living and Quality of Life

General Population

Relative standard of living of First Nations people – General population



Source: EKOS – Rethinking Government 2005 – Wave 2

- When asked to directly compare the standard of living of First Nations people relative to people in the rest of Canada, Canadians believe that First Nations have a worse (59%) standard of living.
- Slightly more than one-quarter (27%) think that the standard of living of First Nations people is more or less the same while only nine percent believe that it is better than that of people in the rest of Canada.
- Regionally, those living in British Columbia and the Prairies are most likely to say that the standard of living of First Nations people is worse than it is among people in the rest of Canada. Quebecers and Atlantic Canadians are least likely to say that the standard of living of First Nations people is worse.

North

Non-Aboriginal people said that the main advantages of life in the North revolve around "freedom" and a pace of life that is much less hectic than in the south. From a Northern perspective, living in a large Canadian urban centre means being part of a "rat race" where people have to compete for good jobs and work long hours.

Non-Aboriginal people also emphasized the economic advantages of living in a part of Canada where employment opportunities are plentiful and the wages relatively high if one is educated and has a decent work ethic.

"It's a much slower pace up here. People are really mellow. Nothing is a big deal."

"It's hard to explain, you just feel free. Down south there are so many rules."

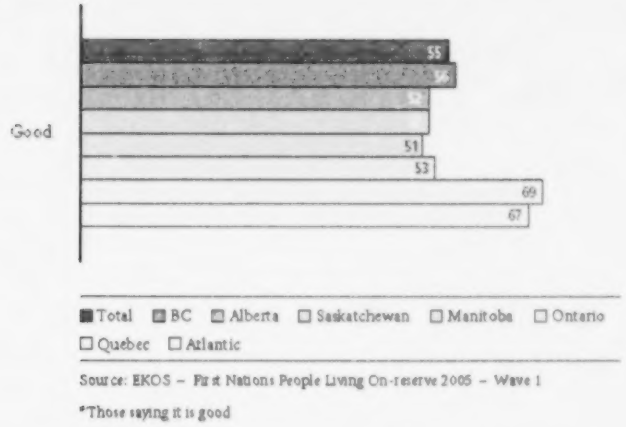
Some of the long-time non-Aboriginal residents sometimes spoke of what can be best understood as the "freedom of the frontier": a way of life relatively unfettered by government regulations and social conventions.

Further discussion, however, led some of these participants to lament the erosion of their libertarian way of life caused by the expansion of government: a phenomenon born out of economic development and the growth of a non-Aboriginal professional and managerial class.

Both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal participants saw similar downsides to Northern life. The main drawbacks included the isolation and monotony of life, particularly during the long, dark winter months. Depending on one's perspective, the employment and overall economic situation could be viewed as either negative or positive, but everyone agreed that having to live away from home for long periods to go to school or work could place a significant amount of strain on families.

On-reserve

Current quality of life – On-reserve*



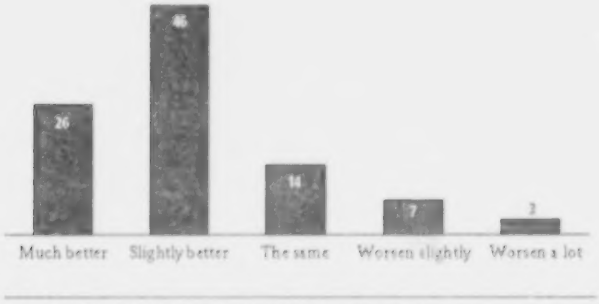
Source: EKOS – First Nations People Living On-reserve 2005 – Wave 1

*Those saying it is good

When First Nations people living on reserves are asked to rate their own quality of life, the results are positive.

- More than one-half (55%) of First Nations people living on reserves currently rate their quality of life positively. One third (33%) say that it is neither good nor poor while only one in ten (11%) say that their quality of life is poor.
- Looking at the results by region, we find that the most positive quality of life ratings on reserves are in Atlantic Canada and Quebec, while Manitoba receives the lowest rating.

Quality of life over the next 12 months – On-Reserve



Source: EKOS – First Nations People Living On-reserve 2005 – Wave 1

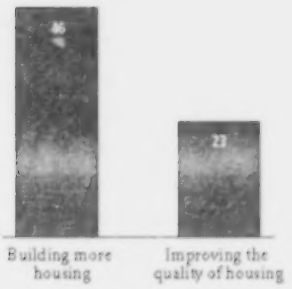
As a follow-up question, First Nations people were asked whether they saw their quality of life on reserves as getting better or worse.

- A large majority (72%) believe that their quality of life will either get slightly better (46%) or much better (26%) over the next 12 months. Only one in ten (10%) believes that their quality of life will worsen either slightly (7%) or a lot (3%).
- Fourteen percent are unsure as to whether their quality of life will improve or deteriorate over the next 12 months.

B – Housing Issues

North

Importance of housing issues



Source: GPC Survey of the North 2005

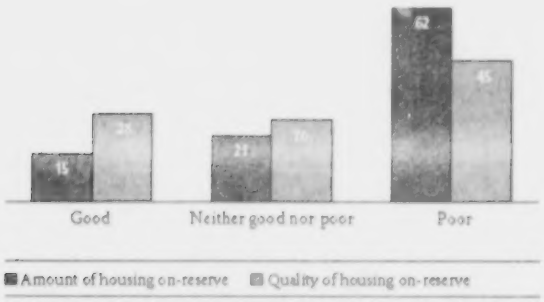
Housing remains a key priority for those living north of the 60th parallel. Northerners were presented with a list of general issues affecting the North and asked to rank their relative importance. Both the lack of housing and the affordability of housing were examined.

- Building more housing is seen as an issue of importance for nearly one-half (46%) of Northerners. Residents of Nunavut (63%) are most likely among the Northern regions to believe that building more housing is important.
- Improving the quality of existing housing is seen as much less of a priority and is seen as important by only one-quarter (23%) of Northerners.

On-reserve

First Nations people living on reserves were also asked to rate the amount and quality of housing on reserves.

Amount and quality of housing on-reserve



Source: EKOS – First Nations People Living On-reserve 2005 – Wave 1

- A majority of First Nations people (62%) say that the amount of housing on reserves is poor. In fact, only 15 percent of First Nations people believe that there is an acceptable amount of housing on reserves.
- The quality of existing housing on reserves receives a more positive rating. Less than one-half (45%) believe that the quality of housing on reserves is poor, while nearly three in ten (28%) believe it is good.
- It should be noted, however, that a relatively large number (26%) do not provide a response to this question.

In addition to our survey research on housing issues, we also examined housing in more depth during our Northern focus group research.

- The shortage of safe and affordable housing was an issue in every community in where focus groups were held.
- Unlike in the south where almost all housing is private, the high cost of housing in the North has meant that many people cannot afford a home without some type of subsidy. Lack of housing has led to overcrowding and strife, and to people living in unsafe conditions.

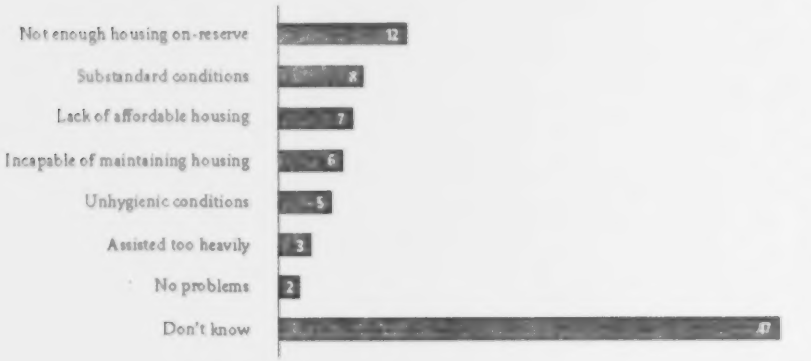
"There's families that are living in buildings that should be condemned."

C – Awareness of Aboriginal Housing Issues

General Population

While housing is clearly viewed as one of the major issues for First Nations, Inuit and Métis people in Canada, it is important to understand how housing in these communities is viewed by the population as a whole.

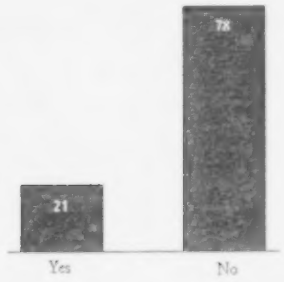
Most important housing issue for Aboriginal people



Source: EKOS – Rethinking Government 2004 – Wave 4

- Canadians were asked about the most important housing issue currently facing Aboriginal people. Nearly one-half of Canadians (47%) are unable or unwilling to provide an answer to this question.
- Among those that are able to provide an answer to this question, there is no one clear issue that is seen as the most important.
- The lack of housing on reserves (12%) is, however, the most popular mention among those that provide an answer. Substandard conditions (8%) and the lack of affordable housing (7%) also register as top of mind issues.

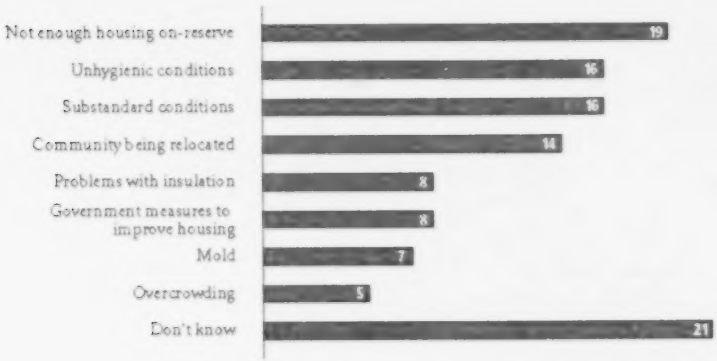
Recall of Aboriginal housing stories in media



Source: EKOS – Rethinking Government 2004 – Wave 4

- When Canadians are asked if they have heard about an Aboriginal housing story that has recently been in the news, a large majority (78%) say that they have not. Awareness of an Aboriginal housing story does, however, tend to increase with a person's age.

Subject of recent media story on Aboriginal housing issues



Source: EKOS – Rethinking Government 2004 – Wave 4

- Among those that have heard of a recent media story dealing with housing, two in ten (21%) cannot remember what it was about.
- Of those who specifically remember a story about housing on reserves, those who remember the subject being a lack of housing is highest by a small margin (19%). Equal numbers remember a story dealing with conditions that were either unhygienic (16%) or substandard (16%), while a slightly smaller number recalled a story about a community being relocated (14%).

THE RESULTS

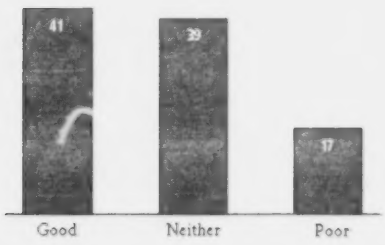
SECTION FIVE – VIEWS ON NEGOTIATIONS AND RELATIONSHIP-BUILDING

Section Five – Views on Negotiations and Relationship-building

A – Views and Perceptions of Racism

On-reserve

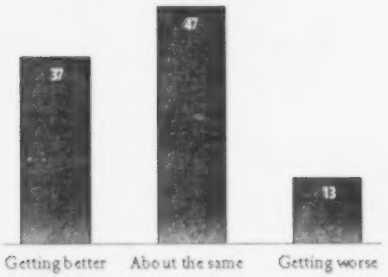
Current relations between Aboriginal people and other Canadians



Source: EKOS – First Nations People Living On-reserve 2005 – Wave 1

- When First Nations people living on reserves are asked to rate the state of the current relationship between Aboriginal people and other people in Canada, nearly equal numbers say that they are either good (41%) or neither good nor poor (39%).
- Seventeen percent of First Nations people living on reserves say that relations are poor.

Progress of relations between Aboriginal people and other Canadians

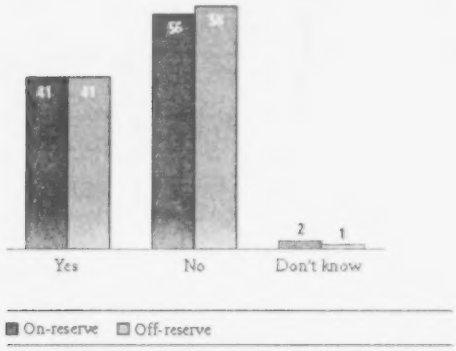


Source: EKOS – First Nations People Living On-reserve 2005 – Wave 1

As a follow-up to the previous question regarding the state of the current relationship, we asked First Nations people whether they believed relations between Aboriginal people and other people in Canada were improving or deteriorating.

- Currently, nearly one-half (47%) say that the relationship remains relatively unchanged. More than one-third (37%) say that relations between the two groups are getting better.
- Only 13 percent believe that relations between Aboriginal people and other people in Canada are getting worse.

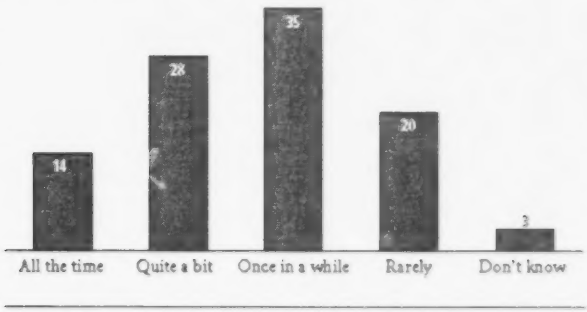
Incidence of racism or discrimination in past two years



Source: EKOS – First Nations People Living On-reserve 2005 – Wave 2
Survey of Aboriginal People Living off-reserve 2003

- On a more personal level, First Nations people living on reserves were asked whether they had been victims of racism or discrimination over the past two years.
- Encouragingly, more than one-half of those living on a reserve (56%) say that they have not experienced racism in the past two years. Four in ten (41%) do, however, say that they have experienced racism in some form.

Perceived frequency of racism against First Nations



Source: EKOS – First Nations People Living On-reserve 2005 – Wave 2

- Currently, more than one-third of First Nations (35%) believe that racism occurs at least once in a while. More than one quarter (28%) perceive racism as occurring quite a bit, while 14 percent believe it happens all the time. Two in ten (20%) believe racism against First Nations people living on reserves occurs rarely.

- However, if we look at the results of those who say that racism happens with some frequency (either all the time, quite a bit or once in a while) we find that over two-thirds of First Nations people on reserves (77%) hold this belief.

On- and off-reserve – Manitoba

Frequency of experiencing racism – Manitoba

Source: Probe Research – Indigenous Voices 2005

- More than one quarter (28%) of Aboriginal people living in Manitoba strongly agree that they often face racism and discrimination from non-Aboriginal people.
- If we break the results down by community, we find that Aboriginal people living outside of Winnipeg (35%) are much more likely than those living in Winnipeg (20%) to strongly agree that they have experienced racism.

Off-reserve

The issues of racism and intolerance among Aboriginal people were also examined during a series of national focus groups. In these sessions it was found that there appears to be some resentment of, or confusion towards, ethnic minorities among Aboriginal people who migrate to the city. While this should in no way be seen as the predominant view of Aboriginal people, the frequency with which it was mentioned in the groups bears reporting.

"I couldn't believe when I came to the city and saw all these [East Indian people]."

According to Aboriginal people living off-reserve, many Aboriginal people migrating to the city from their reserve experience severe culture shock. This is often fuelled by seemingly boundless freedom, temptation, the fast pace of life, high cost of living and the multicultural character of large urban centres. The multicultural nature of many large Canadian urban centres can be a particular surprise to some Aboriginal people upon their arrival in the city.

North

Issues dealing with discrimination and the relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people were examined in qualitative research among Northerners.

"I had never seen a black person before. I'm not kidding."

According to participants in the North, relations between Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people range from cordial to good, with most agreeing that people formed opinions of others based less on their ethnicity than on their personal characteristics.

In some groups, participants described a community in which overt racism was rare, but also where there was limited socializing taking place between Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals. Other parts of the discussions, however, clearly revealed the presence of some tension and resentment between the two groups.

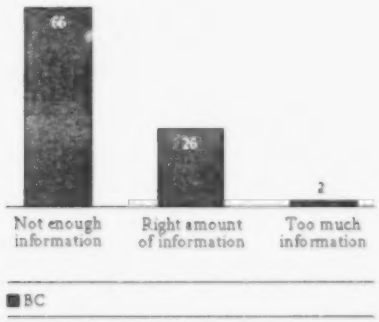
"Up here, you're either a jerk, or a nice guy. Whether you're Inuit or white, doesn't matter."

B – Treaties, Land Claims and Self-Government

Treaty negotiations in BC

Treaty negotiations currently have a high profile among British Columbians. In September 2004, treaty negotiations and land claims were the main responses among most British Columbians (29%) when asked about Aboriginal issues recently in the news. In fact, this finding was consistent in all three waves of the research conducted in 2004.

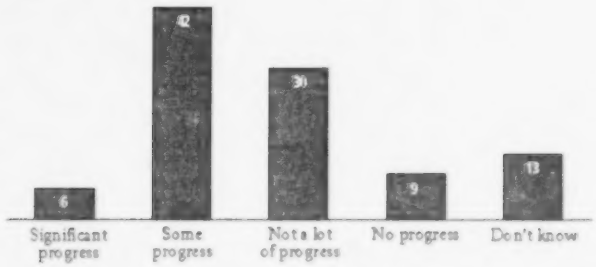
Amount of information regarding specific treaty negotiations



Source: Ipsos – Aboriginal Issues in BC

- Despite the fact that treaty negotiations are a top-of-mind issue, most British Columbians (66%) believe there is not enough information currently available on treaty negotiations in their area. Twenty-six percent of British Columbians think just enough information is available while two percent report that too much information is available on treaty negotiations.

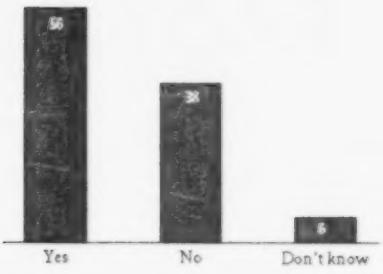
Progress of treaty negotiations



Source: Ipsos – Aboriginal Issues in BC, 2005

- Although British Columbians continue to think some progress is being made completing treaty negotiations in BC, there has been little change from the December and September 2004 waves. Forty-eight percent of British Columbians say that a significant amount (6%) or some (42%) progress is being made. This compares to 53 percent in December and 48 percent in September.

Benefit of completing treaties in BC



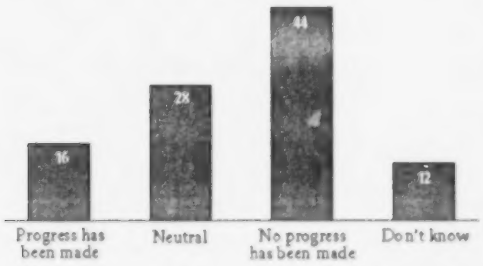
Source: Ipsos – Aboriginal Issues in BC, 2004

- A majority of British Columbians believe that completing treaties will be a benefit to British Columbians as a whole. Fifty-six percent think completing treaty negotiations in BC will be beneficial, while slightly less than four in ten (38%) do not believe this will be a benefit. Only six percent do not provide an answer to this question.

- The education level of BC respondents is a key indicator of support for the treaty process and its benefits. Just under two-thirds of respondents (63%) with a university education think completing treaty negotiations will benefit British Columbians compared to less than one half (47%) of those with a high school education.

Land claims

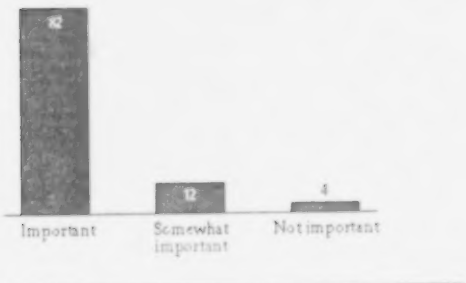
Progress on resolution of land claims issues



Source: Omnibus Survey in Northern Ontario, 2005

- A large number of northern Ontarians (44%) currently believes that no progress has been made on the resolution of land claims. Only 16 percent of those living in northern Ontario currently believe that progress has been made on this issue.
- Even though opinion on this issue strongly tends towards pessimism, three in ten (28%) are actually neutral towards the issue while 12 percent say they don't know.

Importance of settling land claims in improving the lives of First Nations people



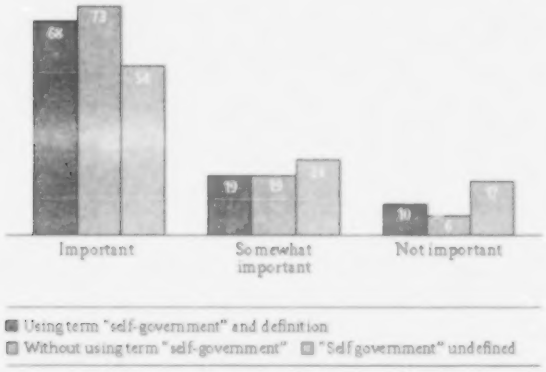
Source: EKOS – First Nations People Living On-reserve 2005 – Wave 1

First Nations people across Canada were also asked about the overall importance of settling land claims and increasing the amount of lands and resources available to First Nations people.

- A large majority of First Nations people living on reserves (82%) believe that settling land claims is important in improving the lives of First Nations people.

On-reserve

Importance of self-government in improving the lives of First Nations people



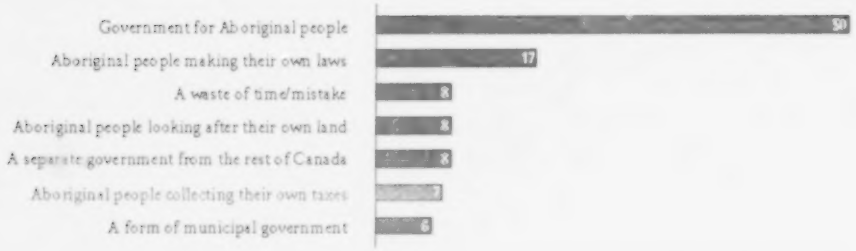
Source: EKOS – First Nations People Living On-reserve 2005 – Wave 1

When testing the concept of self-government among First Nations people living on reserves, it is believed that many participants may not understand the term "self-government". In order to test this assumption, three different variations of a question on the importance of self-government were asked: once using the term "self-government" alone, once using the term with an explanation, and once explaining the concept while not using the term "self-government" explicitly.

- The results from the latter two versions of the question are comparable. Majorities believe that self-government for Aboriginal people is important both when the term and definition are used together (68%) and when the concept is mentioned without explicitly using the term (73%). Interestingly, when the concept is tested without explicitly using the term "self-government", we find that support increases a slight amount.
- When the word "self-government" is used without being paired with a definition, we find that the perceived importance is lower. Slightly more than one-half (54%) say that self-government is important when the term is used without a definition being included.

General Population – BC

Awareness of self-government – Top seven choices



Source: Ipsos – Aboriginal Issues in BC

To further explore awareness of the term "self-government", an open-ended question was asked of British Columbians asking for the meaning of the term.

- As might be expected, one-half (50%) of BC residents defined self-government as "Government for Aboriginal people".
- Seventeen percent believe that self-government refers more specifically to Aboriginal people making their own laws.
- Other responses include: self-government is a mistake; it means that Aboriginal people will look after their own land; and that this government will be separate from the rest of Canada.

C – Attitudes Regarding the Powley Decision

General Population and Métis

The Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs was recently tasked with the additional mandate of Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians. In order to better communicate with Métis, Status and Non-Status Indians and understand issues affecting them, INAC recently undertook a project in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and selected districts of northern Ontario dealing with attitudes toward the Powley decision.

The Powley Decision

Steve and Roddy Powley are two Métis men who killed a moose in 1993 and were charged with contravening Ontario hunting law. The men argued that section 35 of the *Constitution Act*, 1982 protects the right of Métis to hunt for food. The case was appealed up to the Supreme Court of Canada (SCC), which ruled in favour of the Powleys in September 2003. In its decision, the SCC found that the Métis community in and around Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario has an Aboriginal right, protected by section 35 of the *Constitution Act*, 1982, to hunt for food.[1]

Awareness of the Powley Decision

Source: Ipsos – Research on the Powley Decision

- Awareness of the Powley decision is quite low among Canadians with over six in ten (62%) saying they are not at all aware and two in ten (19%) say they are not very aware of this decision.
- Looking at the results by demographic breakdown, we find that awareness is lowest among younger respondents and those living in British Columbia and Alberta.

1 The SCC's ruling is accessible online at **www.lexum.umontreal.ca/csc-scc/en/rec/index.html**.

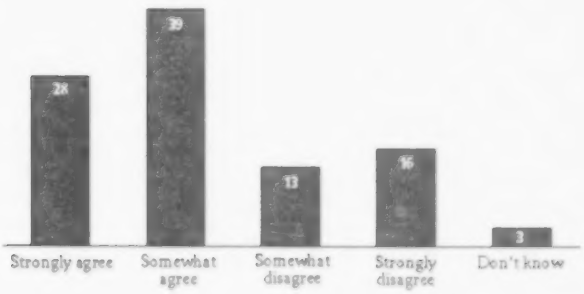
Perceived effect of the Powley Decision

Source: Ipsos – Research on the Powley Decision

Despite the low overall awareness, it is important to determine whether there is a perceived effect of the decision among Canadians.

- A majority (60%) says that the decision will make no difference in their lives. A high proportion of Canadians do not give a response (21%) to this question.
- Even though awareness is low, there remains a small but significant proportion who believes the decision will have a bad effect on their lives (12%).

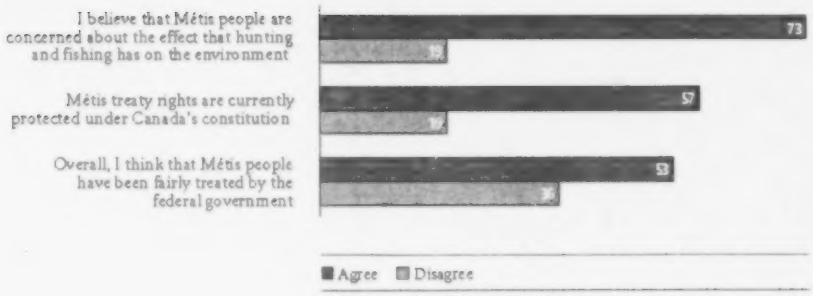
Agreement that Métis fishing and hunting areas should remain the same



Source: Ipsos – Research on the Powley Decision

- When Canadians are asked if they agree or disagree that Métis fishing and hunting areas should remain the same, a majority (67% overall; 28% strongly) agrees that they should remain as they are.
- Three in ten (29% overall; 16% strongly) disagree that Métis fishing and hunting areas should remain as they are currently.

Level of agreement with statements regarding Métis people


I believe that Métis people are concerned about the effect that hunting and fishing has on the environment
73
Métis treaty rights are currently protected under Canada's constitution
57
Overall, I think that Métis people have been fairly treated by the federal government
53
Agree
Disagree

Source: Ipsos – Research on the Powley Decision – Wave 2

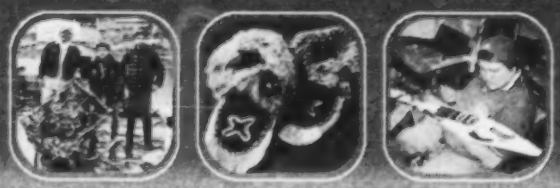
Canadians were also asked for their level of agreement with three statements regarding Métis people.

- Overall, Canadians agree most strongly (73%) with the statement that Métis people are concerned about the effect that hunting and fishing has on the environment.
- A smaller majority (57%) agrees with the statement that Métis rights are currently protected under Canada's constitution.
- Slightly more than one-half (53%) agrees that Métis people have been treated fairly by the government.

Off-reserve

The subject of the Powley decision was also examined in our qualitative groups held among Aboriginal people living off-reserve. During this research, INAC held six focus groups with Métis people specifically. Discussion on views and attitudes related to the Powley decision were generally limited to those focus groups with Métis people.

To some of the participants in these groups, the Powley decision meant more than recognition; it also opened the door to the possibility of additional rights (e.g., land, resources) at some point in the future. Most of those who held out hope for broader rights recognition assumed that any additional right they received would likely take years. The best-case scenario would see Métis people obtain rights to education, land and resources within a generation.



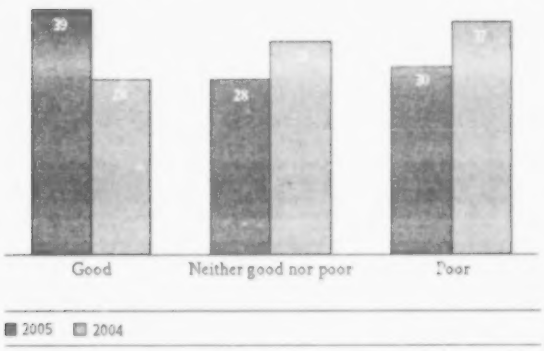
THE RESULTS

SECTION SIX – VIEWS ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

A – Economic Conditions Among First Nations People

First Nations On-reserve

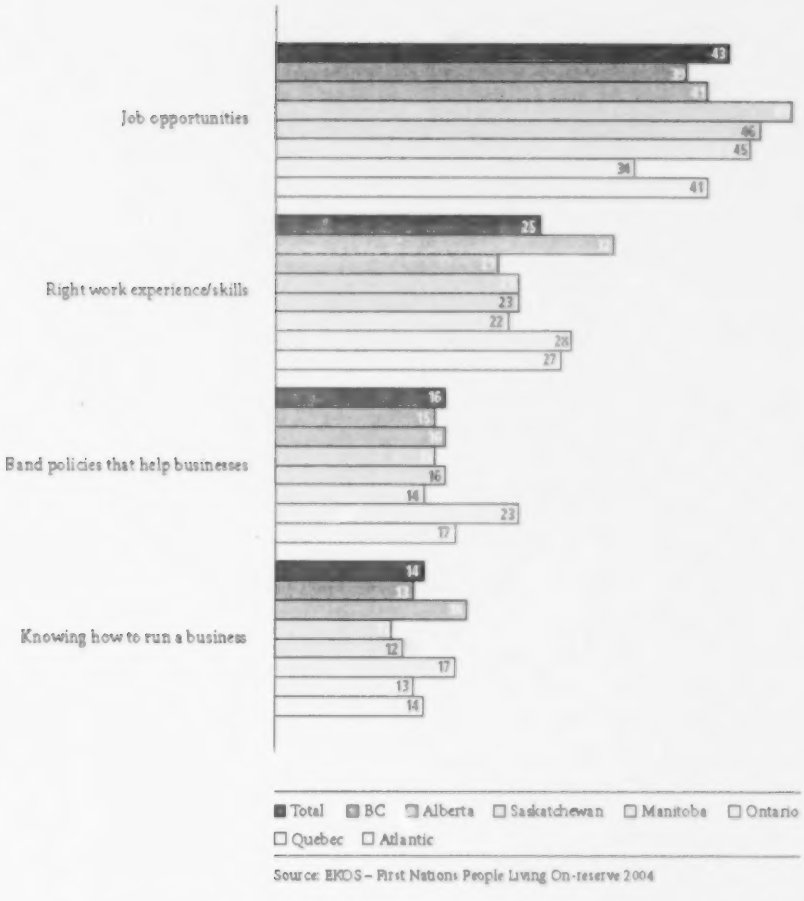
Current economic conditions on reserves



Source: EKOS – First Nations People Living On-reserve 2005 – Wave 2
EKOS – First Nations People Living On-reserve 2004

- First Nations people living on reserves currently say that economic conditions on reserves are good (39%). Encouragingly, this number is up 11 points from when the same question was asked in 2004.
- While these are encouraging numbers, three in ten (28%) First Nations people still believe that economic conditions on reserves are poor.
- Both those that say conditions are remaining the same or that they are deteriorating have decreased in the past year, while those that say conditions are good has increased.

Elements that would improve economy on reserves



Source: EKOS – First Nations People Living On-reserve 2004

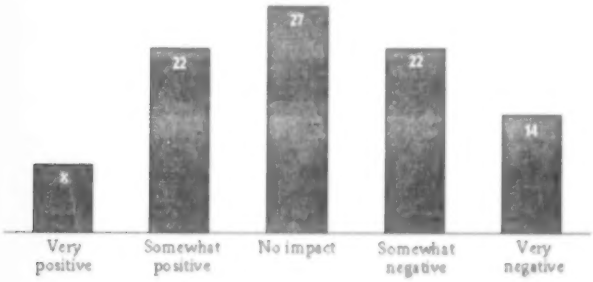
- When First Nations people on reserves are asked to rate a series of changes that might improve the economy on reserves, they clearly prefer more job opportunities (43%).
- One-quarter (25%) say that having the right experience or skills would make a strong improvement in the economy on reserves. Nearly equal numbers see band policies that help businesses (16%) or simply knowing how to run a business (14%) as being the most important changes to improve the economy on reserves.

- Regionally, the desire for job opportunities is highest in Saskatchewan and lowest in Quebec. Having the right work experience or skills is proportionately higher in British Columbia.
- It is also interesting to note that the desire for band policies to help businesses is significantly higher in Quebec than in other regions.

B – Aboriginal Access to Natural Resources

General Population

Increased Aboriginal access to natural resources

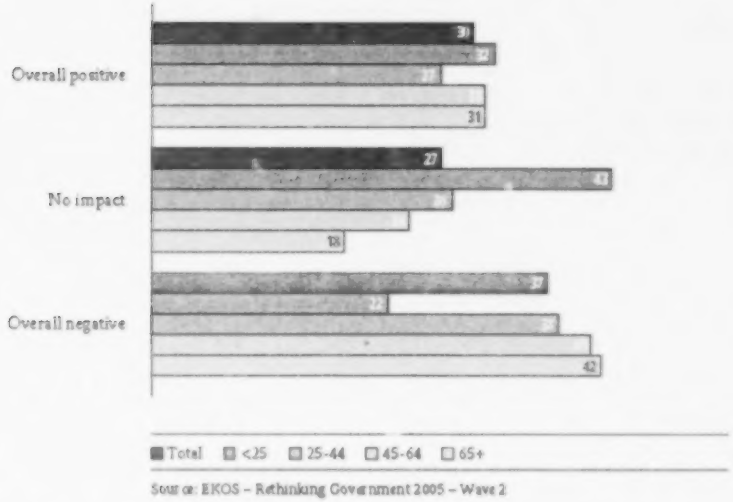


Source: EKOS – Rethinking Government 2005 – Wave 2

General population Canadians were asked for their views regarding increased Aboriginal access to natural resources.

- More than one-third (36% overall; 14% very strongly) feel that allowing such access would be negative. Three in ten (30% overall; 8% very strongly) feel that this would be a positive step although it should be noted that "strong" support (those saying very positive) is proportionately lower than those who feel this is very negative.
- Nearly three in ten (27%) believe that this will have no impact at all.

Increased Aboriginal access to natural resources – by age

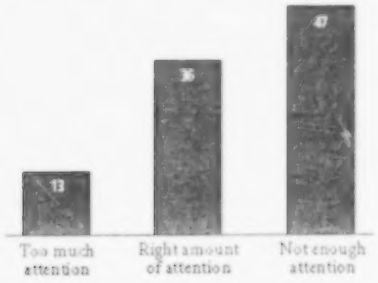


Source: EKOS – Rethinking Government 2005 – Wave 2

When we look at the results for this question based on a person's age, we find an interesting trend develops.

- The likelihood of saying this will have a negative effect increases with a person's age. Despite the small sizes of the sub-sample, this trend is particularly striking in that there is a 20 point difference between those who are under 25 and those who are over 65.

Federal attention to the economic integration of Aboriginal people

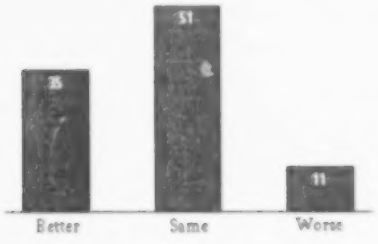


Source: HRSDC – Public Opinion Tracking Survey 2005

Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) recently conducted a study measuring views related to the integration of Aboriginal people into the economy.

- Overall, Canadians believe that the federal government is not paying enough attention to the economic integration of Aboriginal people into the economy (47%).
- Only 13 percent currently believe that there is too much attention being paid to integrating Aboriginal people into the economy.
- Slightly more than one-third (36%) believe that the right amount of attention is being paid to this issue.

Outlook over next 10 years for the economic integration of Aboriginal people



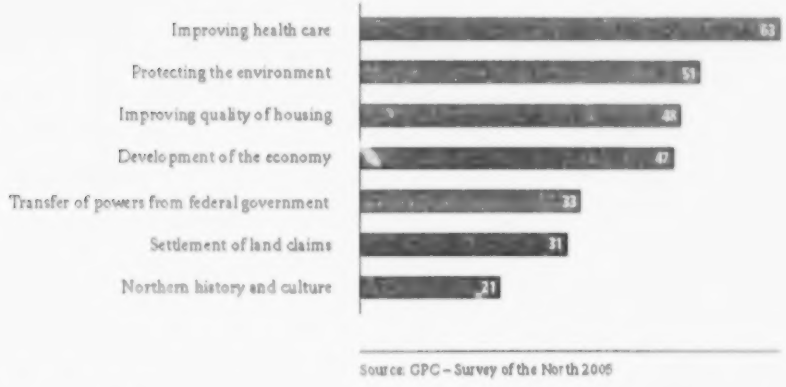
Source: HRSDC – Public Opinion Tracking Survey 2005

- Looking ahead to the next ten years, a slight majority of Canadians (51%) currently believe that the integration of Aboriginal people into the economy will remain the same.
- Slightly more than one third (35%) believes that the integration of Aboriginal people into the economy will improve over the next ten years. One in ten (11%) believes that this issue will actually worsen in the foreseeable future.

C – Northern Economic Issues

General Population – North

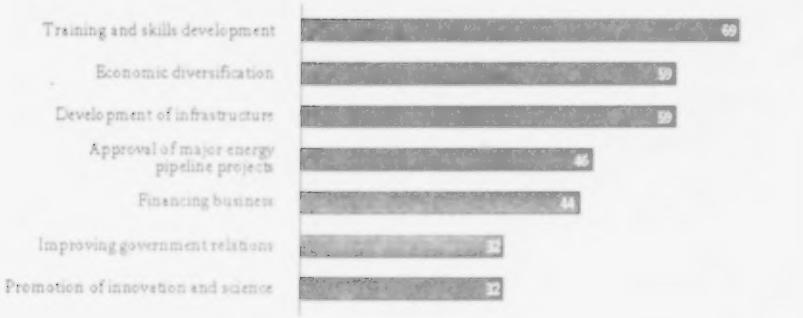
Importance of various Northern issues



Source: GPC – Survey of the North 2005

- When the general population of the North is asked to rate a series of issues related to the North, improving health care (63%) is clearly, and perhaps not surprisingly, the number one choice.
- Developing the Northern economy is seen as a priority (47%), although it does fall somewhere in the middle of the pack.
- It is interesting to note that, for general population Northerners, the protection of the environment outweighs the development of the economy.

Importance for the economic future of the North



Source: GPC – Survey of the North 2005

INAC also asked business decision-makers who live and work in the North to rate a series of economic issues.

- Of the issues tested, training and skills development (69%) is clearly seen as the most important. Economic diversification (59%) and the development of infrastructure (59%) are both equally seen as being high economic priorities for the North.
- Fewer than one-half (46%) see major energy pipeline projects and business financing (44%) as being important issues in the Northern economic scene.
- Fewer than one-third think that improving government relations (32%) and promoting innovation and science (32%) are the most important economic issues facing the North.

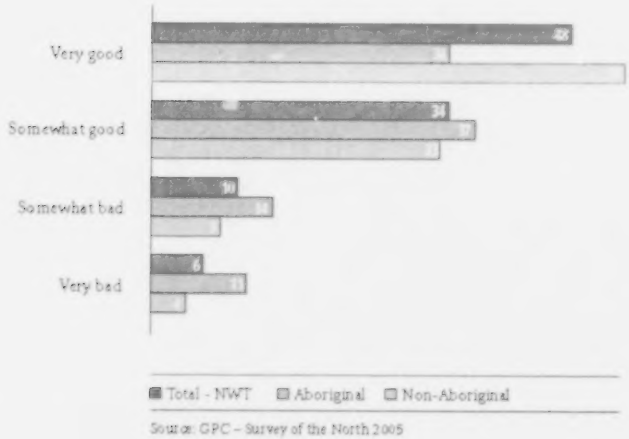
The Results

Section Seven – Views on Northern-Specific Issues

Section Seven – Views on Northern-Specific Issues

A – Mackenzie Gas Project

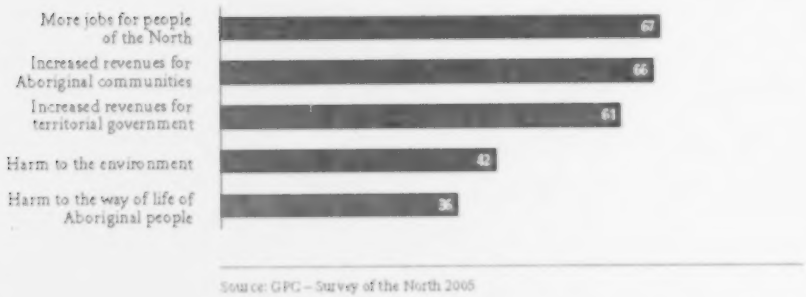
Approval of the Mackenzie Gas Project – NWT



Source: GPC – Survey of the North 2005

- Over three-quarters (78%) of residents of the NWT are familiar with the Mackenzie Gas Project and four out of five (82%) believe that the project is a good idea.
- Both Aboriginal (71%) and non-Aboriginal (87%) people are in favour of the project. It should be noted, however, that the sample sizes for these demographic breakouts are relatively low and that these results should be considered indicative rather than significant.
- Just over one in ten (12%) from the Northwest Territories highlighted the Mackenzie Gas Project as the biggest issue facing the Territory.

Expected consequences of Mackenzie Gas Project – NWT

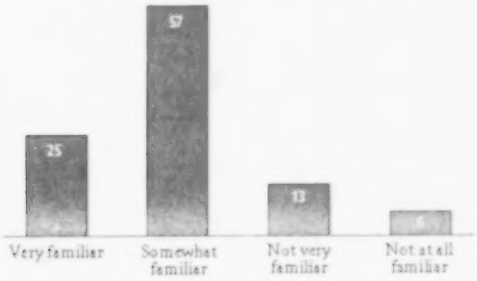


Source: GPG – Survey of the North 2006

- A majority believe the proposed pipeline will create more jobs (67%), increase revenues for Aboriginal people (66%), and increase revenues for the territorial government (61%).
- Over two-fifths (42%) of those surveyed believe the project is likely to harm the environment.
- NWT residents are divided on whether the Mackenzie Gas Project will harm the way of life of Aboriginal people: 36 percent believe the project is likely to harm the way of life of Aboriginal people, while nearly the same number (37%) believe this is not likely to happen.
- In focus group research, a number of Northerners used the Mackenzie Gas Project as a prime example of government indecision and red tape.

B – Alaska Highway Pipeline Project

Familiarity with the Alaska Highway Pipeline Project – Yukon

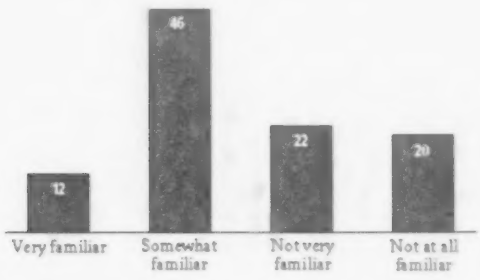


Source: GPC – Survey of the North 2005

- The majority of Yukoners are familiar with the Alaska Highway Pipeline Project (82%) and most believe the project is a good idea (72%).
- Those who believe the pipeline will harm the environment (39%) only slightly outnumber those who believe it will not (35%).
- One-quarter of Northerners (24%) give a neutral response to this question.
- Those Yukoners who believe the pipeline will harm the way of life of Aboriginal people (35%) are slightly outnumbered by those who believe it will do no harm (41%).

C – Alaska-Yukon Rail Link

Familiarity with Alaska-Yukon Rail Link – Yukon



Source: GPC – Survey of the North 2005

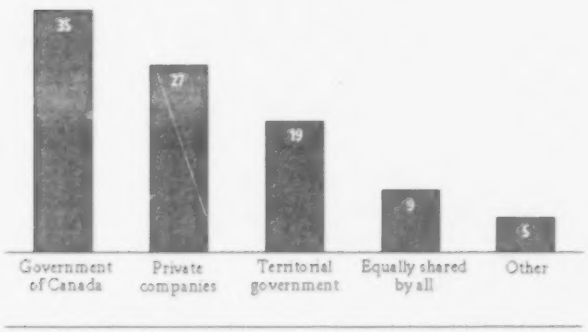
- A majority of Yukon residents (58%) are familiar with the proposed Alaska-Yukon Rail Link Project and 70 percent believe it is a good idea.
- Despite its popularity, only a third of Yukon citizens (and 43% of business decision-makers) believes it will be completed within ten years.

D – Contaminated Sites

Nunavut

- People in Nunavut show a high level of concern for the environmental side-effects from contaminated sites like Resolution Island (78% reported being concerned).
- Of those who reported being concerned, 54 percent are most concerned about the environment and 19 percent are most concerned about health.

Responsibility for clean-up of contaminated sites – Nunavut



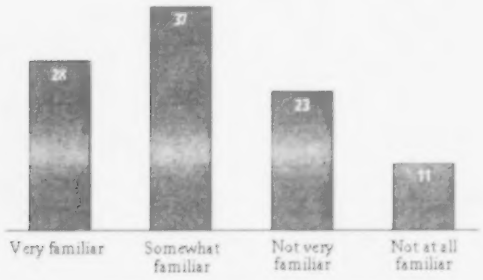
Source: GPC – Survey of the North 2005

- Among Nunavut residents, there is no strong sense as to the responsibility for the clean-up of contaminated sites: a plurality of 35 percent believe it should be the Government of Canada; 27 percent believe it should be private companies; and 19 percent believe it should be the Nunavut government.
- In focus group research, people showed significant concern for contaminated sites and many were able to identify specific sites. There was consensus that contamination is the result of people having cared very little about the North and many blamed the federal government specifically for this situation.

General Population

In 2005, Environment Canada conducted a national study of views and perceptions related to contaminated sites among Canadians in the general population.

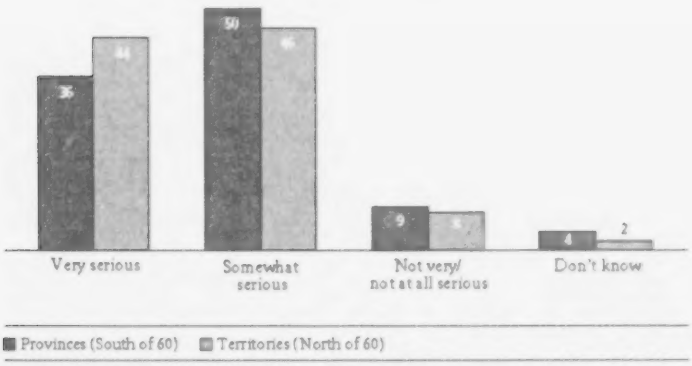
Familiarity with issue of contaminated sites



Source: 2005 Public Opinion Survey on Contaminated Sites – Environment Canada

- Across the territories, 28 percent are very familiar and 37 percent somewhat familiar with the issue of contaminated sites in their territory.

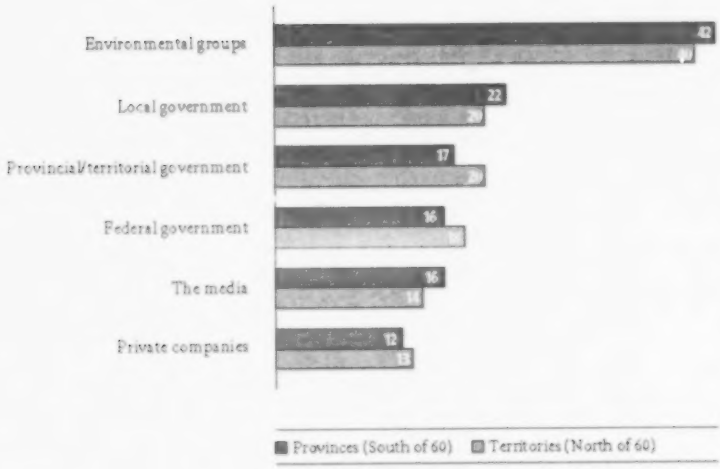
Seriousness of contaminated sites



Source: 2005 Public Opinion Survey on Contaminated Sites – Environment Canada

- As well, 44 percent see this as a very serious problem and 46 percent see this as a somewhat serious problem. In comparison, 36 percent South of 60 see this as a very serious problem while 50 percent see this as a somewhat serious problem.

Level of trust in information about contaminated sites by source*



Source: 2005 Public Opinion Survey on Contaminated Sites

* Those who have a great deal of trust

- Canadians both north (40%) and south (42%) of 60° are most likely to say that they would trust information about a local contaminated site provided by environmental groups. Next on the list are local governments (22% South; 20% North), provincial/territorial governments (17% South; 20% North), federal government (16% South; 18% North), the media (16% South; 14% North) and private companies (12% South; 13% North).

THE RESULTS

APPENDIX – GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Appendix – Glossary of Terms*

Focus group: A group of individuals selected from a wider population according to specific criteria to participate in a discussion about a particular subject or area. Participants are encouraged to offer their opinions about the topic of interest and to react to comments from others in the group.

Margin of error: Statistical formula that allows for the calculation of the level of precision of survey results. The margin of error accounts only for errors associated with sampling.

Methodology: A methodology is the term which describes the methods that will be employed in gathering data for any given research project.

Qualitative research: Information obtained about some members of a target population through unstructured or semi-structured procedures such as focus groups, discussions or one-on-one interviews. Results from qualitative research are not expressed numerically and are not considered to be statistically valid.

Quantitative research: Information from all (or a sub-sample) of individuals within a target population through structured procedures, with the intent of generalizing the findings to the larger population.

Sampling: The method of selecting members of the target population for inclusion into the subset of individuals (sample) who will be contacted for an interview or to receive a questionnaire.

Sub-sample: Used in quantitative survey research to further define an audience based on their responses to a given question. For example, a survey of First Nations might include a sub-sample of First Nations who do not have access to the Internet.

Survey: The process of collecting information from a small proportion of the target population as opposed to collecting information from the total target population. The most commonly used survey methodology is telephone surveying. Answers from quantitative surveys are grouped together and the results are presented numerically with a specified degree of statistical reliability.

* These terms are based on those key research terms outlined in "Research Techniques: Guideposts to Value" produced by Public Works and Government Services Canada in April 2005.